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THE HISTORY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN TRAVANCORE
1806–1908

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By Dr. R. N. Yesudas

A People's Revolt in Travancore

Colonel John Munro in Travancore

British Policy in Travancore, 1805-1859

The English and the Christians in Kerala, 1800-1836

THE HISTORY OF THE

LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY IN TRAVANCORE 1806-1908

by

DR. R. N. YESUDAS

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1980

THE HISTORY OF THE LONDON MISSIONARY
SOCIETY IN TRAVANCORE 1806-1908

Dr. R. N. Yesudas

History — This study has been accepted by the University
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PREFACE

This treatise, originally presented as a doctoral dissertation to the University of Kerala, is a study of an unexplored aspect of the history of Kerala. It describes the role the London Missionary Society played in the religious, social, political and cultural history of Travancore. Although the primary aim of the society was the propagation of Protestant Christianity, it also turned its attention to the social injustices and inequalities existing in Travancore, and acted as a catalytic agent for radical changes in the body politic. No serious and detailed study of the subject has been attempted so far; even in standard historical works this is not treated in the manner it deserves.

The study is based mostly on primary sources. In the treatment of a subject of this kind, one has to depend mostly on the missionary and official records, which give a sufficiently clear perspective of both the substantive and adjective aspects of the progress and impact of the Mission. These records are of a complex nature. The most important among the missionary records are, the Annual Reports of the L.M.S., The Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle, Travancore District Committee Correspondence, Minutes, and Reports, and the unpublished letters of missionaries. Though they were written from the missionary point of view they are the only records that give detailed information about the social conditions of the period. The official records consist of Reports, Minutes, Proclamations, Memoranda, Despatches, Government Orders, and the like. They are an illuminating source of information for the study of the impact of Missionary work, the relations of the missionaries with the Travancore Government and the attitude of the latter toward them. Publications of various missionary societies, books written by the missionaries, Travel Accounts, Memoirs, Journals, Manuals, Gazettes and Gazetteers have also been consulted. The sources I have utilized in the thesis are collected from the following archives and repositories of books and journals: the Indian Church History Archives, Bangalore; the National Archives of India, New Delhi; Tamilnad Archives, Connemara Library, Theosophical Society Library, Madras; English Records Section of the Kerala Government Secretariat, Directorate of State Archives, Legislature Library, Kerala University Library, State Central Library, and United Theological Seminary Library, Trivandrum.

I have great pleasure to record here my indebtedness to my research guide Dr. T.K. Ravindran, Professor and Head of the Department of History, and Editor, *Journal of Indian History*, University of Kerala. It has been my fortune to get this great scholar and eminent historian to guide me in my work. The time and effort he has taken to help bring this material to light can hardly be measured.

I am extremely grateful to Mr. Sooja Jones, who after reading the manuscript made valuable suggestions and modifications. I also remember with gratitude the loving encouragement and help received from my wife Dr. Santha.

Many friends and colleagues have directly or indirectly helped me in the venture, and I am thankful to them all.

R. N. YESUDAS

ABBREVIATION

E. M. M. C. — Evangelical Magazine and Missionary Chronicle

For. Pol. Cons. — Foreign Political Consultation

For. Pol. Proc. — Foreign Political Proceedings

For. Sec. Cons. — Foreign Secret Consultation

General Assembly, 1905 — The first General Assembly of the General Union of the United Churches of South India Connected with the London Missionary Society and American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Madura, July 1905

General Assembly, 1907 — The Second General Assembly of the United Churches of the London Missionary Society and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in South India and Ceylon, July 1907

General Assembly, 1908 — The First General Assembly of the South India United Church, A Report of the Assembly held in Madras, July 25, 26 and 27, 1908

H. F. — The Harvest Field, AMissionary Magazine

I. E. R. — The Indian Evangelical Review, A Quarterly Journal of Missionary Thought and Effort

Acc
Aut
Tit

K. S. P.	— Kerala Society Papers
L. C.	— Samuel Mateer: The Land of Charity
L. M. S.	— London Missionary Society
L. M. S. Report	— Report of the Directors to the Members of the London Missionary Society
Minutes	— Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Affairs of the East India Company, VI Political
Official Papers	— East India (Travancore), Copies of the Official Papers sent from India Touching the Recent Disturbances in Travancore
Pol. Cons.	— Political Consultation
Pol. Proc.	— Proceedings of the Madras Government in the Political Department
R. E. H. T. M.	— Robert Caldwell: Records of the Early History of the Tinnevelly Mission of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Society for the Propagation of Gospel in Foreign Parts
S. I. U. C.	— South India United Church
T. D. C.	— Travancore District Committee
T. D. C. Report	— Annual Report of the Travancore District Committee in Connection with the London Missionary Society
T. S. M.	— V. Nagam Aiya: The Travancore State Manual

INTRODUCTION

The Protestant Church was the youngest church to be established in Travancore and the origin of its missionary activities is associated with the evangelical revival in England in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Every Christian in England considered it his duty to strive hard for the spreading of the gospel both at home and abroad. Enlightened Christians in England advocated strongly in favour of allowing missionaries to spread the gospel in India. William Wilberforce, that indefatigable champion of noble causes, raised his voice in the British Parliament in favour of the evangelization of India through missionary efforts. This dream became a reality with the founding of missionary societies. Among these the London Missionary Society stood in the vanguard; it came into being in 1795 on a non-denominational basis. The fundamental principle of the Society was " not to send Presbyterianism, Independency, Episcopacy or any other form of Church Order and Government; but the Glorious Gospel of the blessed God."[1] The history of the missionary activities of the Protestant Church in Travancore begins with the arrival of William Tobias Ringeltaube, a missionary of the L. M. S, in 1806.

The Political influence of the British in Travancore in the beginning of the nineteenth century played a vital role in the establishment of a Mission centre of the London Missionary Society in that area. British officers in Travancore evinced a keen interest in the spread of Christianity. They lent their support in aid of the pioneering efforts of the missionaries. Says Herber Drury: "It was fortunate that such men as Macaulay and Munro were in those days the British Residents at the Court of Travancore, for the Raja was much inclined to promote the welfare of his Christian subjects, and the British plenipotentiaries brought their powerful influence in aid of the good cause".[2] They utilized their official position and influence to introduce and spread Christianity in Travancore.

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[1] Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795-1895*, pp. 49-50

William Tobias Ringeltaube, who laid the foundation of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S was greatly assisted by Residents, Col. Colin Macaulay and Col. John Munro. Col. Macaulay procured for him the passport to enter Travancore for spreading Christianity and obtained permission to establish the first Protestant church at Mailadi, in South Travancore. Col. John Munro, the successor of Macaulay "had proselytizing spirit more than the missionaries themselves", and he persuaded the Rajas of Travancore and Cochin to extend a helping hand in the growth of the Mission.[3] Samuel Mateer observed: "He was all powerful in political matters. He greatly favoured the Mission and used his influence on its behalf."[4] With his sincere help Ringeltaube succeeded in establishing the Mission on firm foundation in Travancore.

The activities of the Mission greatly progressed and prospered in the succeeding years.[5] Although the work was first started among the Parayas and it soon spread among

the Nadars,[6] the missionaries who succeeded Ringeltaube were mainly concerned with the latter, who were numerous in South Travancore. About them John Abbs, a missionary, wrote: "The Shanars .... although in an oppressed and degraded condition, had many proud references to a noble ancestry, and were not only capable of mental improvement, but also exceedingly ambitious to hold positions of importance, and take a part in the Government of the country .... The Shanars, however, as a class, were not satisfied with their position".[7] Their attention was also turned to the lower sections of the society, who suffered from caste tyranny and oppression. "The lower orders", Nagam Aiya says, "have nothing to lose but everything to gain by giving up their position in the Hindu social scale. Continuance of their birth religion means to them a continuance of their present degraded condition for all time to come. No wonder then that they have transferred their allegiance to the European missionary and his religion which has brought with it deliverance to them from the trammels of the old-world civilization."[8] The missionaries took a strong stand against caste distinctions within the churches and attempted through the means of education to raise society with the leaven of the gospel. Their aim was to create "an independent, self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating native church". By constant endeavours they succeeded in nurturing and developing local initiative. In 1866 the first step was taken to entrust the responsibilities of the churches into the hands of the native Christians by establishing pastorates and creating the office of deacons to assist the pastors. The missionaries of the L.M.S. also took the leadership in the church union movement of South India and formation of the South India United Church. When the S.I.U.C was formed in 1908 the Travancore Mission of the L.M.S was the most succeesful among the Missions in the whole of India.

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[2] "An Account of Travancore", in Jacob Canter Visscher's *Letters from Malabar*, p. 178

[3] T. K. Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. I, p. 727

[4] L. C., p. 267

[5] The evangelical work of the missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore was confined mainly to South Travancore. It is a strip of land between the Western Ghat and the Arabian Sea, extending from Quilon to Cape Comorin. Eventhough South Travancore is geographically a single unit, after the linguistic reorganization of states in 1956, this area has become part of two states. The Tamil speaking area (Cape Comorin or Kanyakumari) forms part of Tamilnad and the Malayalam speaking area (Trivandrum and Quilon districts) forms part of Kerala. South Travancore at present has two Dioceses of the Church of South India; South Kerala and Cape Comorin.

[6] The Nadars were known as Shanars before 1921. In that year the Madras Government issued an order directing them to adopt the term 'Nadar' in place of 'Shanan' (G. O. No 785, 7 July 1921, Government of Madras, Law (General Department). The chieftains among the Shanars were known as 'Nadans'. B. J. M. Kulasekhara Raj, *A Brief Account of the Nadar Race*, pp. 25-28

[7] John Abbs, *Twenty Two Years' Missionary Experience in Travancore*, p. 151

The missionaries of the L.M.S in Travancore did not limit their exertions to the propagation of the gospel, though that was their primary object. They were moved by the harrowing tales of the oppressed classes and they invested their energies in the amelioration of their conditions "Although our work is to promote the eternal interests of the people", the missionaries write, "we cannot but feel for these poor sufferers; and if, consistently with our higher object, we can procure for them some relief from their temporal distress, it is our delight to do so".[9] Thus with evangelical work they combined their efforts to bring about the social uplift of the down-trodden.

From the second half of the nineteenth century, auspicious clouds of social change began to appear over the

Kerala horizon with the introduction of Engligh education and western liberal thought. People slowly started arrogating to themselves a new status and to develop a new outlook on their rights and privileges. Thus there emerged a people with a new consciousness determined to fight for their birth rights, thereby re-shaping the social infrastructure in Travancore.

A proper assessment of the role played by the L. M. S in the religious, social, political and cultural history of Travancore has not been attempted so far. The present study is a modest attempt to fill this hiatus. It seeks to represent an objective and balanced analysis of the rise and growth of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S and its impact on the history of Travancore. It also seeks to explain how missionaries co-ordinated both evangelism and social work. Unlike other missionary societies that laboured in Travancore, the L. M. S was revolutionary to the extent that it was mainly responsible for a good deal of religious and social changes in Travancore in the nineteenth century. The tidal waves of social change cascaded into an intellectual revolution, churning the cog-wheels of Hinduism itself thereby resulting in a purification of sorts.

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[8] Vol. II, p. 115

[9] *L. M. S. Report, 1841*, p. 72

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND

The real significance of the missionary activities of the L. M. S in Travancore can be properly understood only against the backdrop of the complex political and social setting at the dawn of the nineteenth century. The seeds of Protestant Christianity sown by the L. M. S., fell on a soil made extremely fertile through the decay of traditional institutions.

The political set-up prevailing in Travancore was highly detrimental to the general welfare of the large majority of her people. All state authority was centred in the Raja and delegated by him to a hierarchy of officials chosen at his pleasure.[1] Plunged in sensual pleasures the Raja had little time to care for the affairs of the state and he was at the mercy of his Dewan, who exercised supreme militiary and civil authority.[2] Under him were a number of officials in different grades. On receiving appointment an officer had to offer valuable presents to the Raja. Within the course of two or three years these officers exacted large sums of money from the people, and were later relieved by the state of their illegal earnings.[3] The Raja therefore did not restrain them, knowing that their plunder would flow to his own coffers. Since there was no machinery for the redressal of grievance, the people sought justice through bribery. This practice existed throughout the land.[4] Col. John Munro says:

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[1] Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George 14 April 1818. For, Pol. Proc., Fort William, 17 July 1818, No. 20, pp. 21-39.

[2] Ibid., pp. 36-39.

[3] *Minutes*, p. 276

> Bribery and extortion prevailed in all parts: every officer of the Government had the authority to impose fines on the people at his pleasure. The property of the inhabitants was considered to belong to the Rajah on their death; and was only redeemed by very oppressive fines.[5]

The iniquitous confederacy of the public servants made the government a highly oppressive one. The officers were organized on principles of military subordination and with impunity defrauded their sovereign while oppressing his subjects.[6] There was only one authority recognized and obeyed throughout the country; the petty chiefs known variously as *karyakkar, madampimar, prabhukkanmar,* etc.[7] "These men" writes John Cox, "find their way into every corner, seizing the people's goods, and forcing them in the name of their government, to labour without pay; the whole land groans under their tyranny".[8] The oppression of the officers sometimes led to rebellion. Munro says:

> The strict gradation of authority established among the Karigars and the entire command which they possessed over the services of the people, contributed to perpetuate military feelings in the country, and to facilitate the means of commotion and insurrection. They were, in fact,

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[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Quoted by Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, "Colonel Munro", *K. S. P.*, vol. II, (1931), series, 7, pp. 41-70.

[6] *Minutes*, p. 278.

[7] Ward and Conner, *Geographical and Statistical Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States, From July 1816 to the end of the year 1820*, vol, I, p. 98.

[8] *L. M. S. Report, 1841*, p. 72

> at once military and civil governors, exercising absolute power in their districts.[9]

The authority invested with the officers enabled them to pursue the philosophy of fraud and coercion. An order disagreeable to an officer or *karyakkar* was seldom enforced. On the other hand, an order favourable to their feelings and wishes was carried out with military promptitude. In fact, responsibility could not be apportioned; they had a kind of military constitution, devoid of laws, sanction and discipline, which prevented it from degenerating into anarchy and misrule.[10]

Travancore had been plunged into utter chaos and confusion in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Balarama Varma, who ascended the throne in 1978, was weak and vicious and had hardly taken any interest in the affairs of the state. His character was "marked by imbecility, caprice and other qualities which show him to be wholly unequal to the task of Government."[11] He was surrounded by intriguing favourites who had no concern for the interests of the people and the state. People cried out against the injustice and oppression which prevailed throughout Travancore.

The establishment of political relations with the English East India Company was a turning point in the history of Travancore. It originated from fear of an invasion by the Mysore Rajas. In the peace treaty with Haidar Ali in 1769 the Raja of Travancore was included as an ally of the Company. However, an agreement between the Raja and the

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[9] *Minutes*, p. 278

[10] Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 14 April 1818. For. Pol. Proc., Fort William, 17 July 1818, No. 20, p. 53.

[11] *Minutes*,. p. 226.

English East India Company for the protection of Travancore was made only in August 1788.[12] In 1795 a permanent treaty was concluded with the Comany “to settle and fix the terms of their old friendship and alliance and for the defence of his country against foreign enemies”.[13] This treaty was revised in 1835 when the English East India Company and the Raja of Travancore “judged it expedient that additional provisions should at this time be made for the purpose of supplying the defects in the said treaty, and of establishing the connection between the said contracting parties on a permanent basis of security in all times to come”.[14] The treaty of 1805 made the Travancore Government follow the advice of the British Government for the benefit of the country and people. [15] To the Raja, the treaty was an “act of extortion” which obliged him to do what he could not “without violating the laws of the country and creating a general cause of discontentment among his subjects”.[16] The treaty set the British relationship with Travancore on firm foundations.

A direct result of the British relations was the appointment of a Resident in the court of the Raja, which had far-reaching

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[12] *Ibid*, pp. 195, 212.

[13] C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries*, vol. X, No. III. p. 28.

[14] For. Pol. Cons., December 1855. Nos. 276-284, pp. 33-34.

[15] According to this treaty the Raja promised “to pay at all times the utmost attention to such advice as the English Government shall occasionally judge it necessary to offer to him, with a view to the economy of his finances, the better collection of his revenues, the administration of justice, the extension of commerce, the encouragement of trade, agriculture and industry, or any other objects connected with the advancement of His Highness's interests, the happiness of his people and the mutual welfare of both.” Ibid., pp. 33 – 51.

[16] Ibid., 4 July 1808, No.14.

effects on the history of Christianity in Travancore. The Residents became gradually “transformed from diplomatic agents representing a foreign power into executive and controlling officers of a superior government.”[17] The whole functions of government in most cases were exercised by the Resident, in fact, if not in appearance.[18] They had comprehensive, though unwritten, authority. Therefore, they frankly adopted the attitude of a superior toward a subordinate. In fact, they decided even the question of succession and acted as the guardians of heir apparents.[19] It is enough to state that “practically all avenues of adventure and initiative were closed to the Princes. They could play polo or shoot tigers.”[20] The Residents, except a few, [21] took a very keen interest in the growth of the Travancore Mission and patronized the different activities of its missionaries. As a result, the local rulers tolerated the activities of the Mission and extended their help occasionally. Thus the Mission and the Christians were quite naturally associated with the colonial power. The missionaries were also aware of this. Ringeltaube, the first missionary, after receiving land from the Queen on the recommendation of Col. Munro, the Resident, had said:

> This grant firmly established the Protestant religion in Travancore as long as the British flag shall continue to fly....[22]

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[17] V. P. Menon, *The Story of the Integration of the States*, p. 6.

[18] Minute by the President, 7 May 1859. *Official Papers*, pp. 43-44.

[19] Col. John Munro to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 12 October 1812. For. Pol. Proc., Fort William, 10 January 1815, No. 6, pp. 119 - 22.

[20] D. V. Tahmankar, *Sardar Patel*, p. 217

[21] There were a few Residents like General Cullen who did not support the missionary activities.

[22] G. Parker, History of the Mission Fields, p. 4.

Thus from the very beginning the missionaries were chaperoned by the British. At times of persecution, the missionaries very often had an appellate authority to present the grievances of the Christians. Throughout the nineteenth century many of the social laws were changed just because the Christian missionaries were able to present their problems through the Resident or through the British Government.

In 1800 Col. Colin Macaulay was appointed British Resident in the court of the Raja of Travancore. He became acquainted with the disorganized state of affairs of the state and presented several representations to the Raja stressing on the necessity of saving the administration from those who were entrusted with it. He wanted a strong man to help him to deal with the problems effectively and found in Velu Tampi, the newly appointed Dewan in 1801, the much needed ability and firmness.[23] Macauly was also alive to the interests of Christianity. At a time when there was much opposition to the establishment of the Mission, he extended his sincere patronage. Referring to his services Ringeltaube writes:

> Our Society is indebted to Colonel Macaulay, without whose determined and fearless interposition none of their missionaries would have been able to set his foot in Travancore [24]

Thus the political conditions were in a way favourable for the work of the missionaries.

The social order obtaining in Travancore at the beginning of the nineteenth century was feudal in character and outline. Feudalism maintained a high watermark throughout

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[23] *Minutes*, p. 227

[24] *R. E H. T. M*, pp 154-55

the nineteenth century and its footprints are clearly discernible in all the government documents of the period. Its origin can be traced back to the tenth and eleventh centuries A. D., to the rise into prominence and power of the Nambudiri Brahimins,[25] following which, the Hindu society did not register any change for the better. The people, being orthodox and conservative, strictly observed the ancestral norms of conduct and religion.[26] Any deviation from the established system was viewed with suspicion and superstitious dread and invariably denounced.[27]

The most interesting factor in the feudal social structure was the division of society in terms of caste. Caste system in all its severity and rigidity divided the Hindu society into a number of groups mutually hating and co-operating only to degrade the other. It was caste which decided the nature of the social relationship of individuals. Its principles made the major section of the people mere slaves of the dominant or privileged classes. In Travancore, the Brahmins and the Nairs formed the privileged classes or caste Hindu groups. Excomunication from his caste to a caste Hindu was worse than death.[28] Those who were excommunicated became untouchables,[29] Christians or Muhammadans.[30]

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[25] Elamulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, pp. 263-64. Keralolpatti, a Malayalam treatise on the early history of Kerala, says that Parasurama, a great Hindu sage, created Keralam and made the Brahmins settle in this land. "Sri Parasuraman caused Brahmans to be in Keralam; he brought Brahmans from various quarters and placed them in Keralam". F. W. Ellis, "Dissertation on the Malayalam Language", *Indian Antiquary*. vol. VII, (1878), p. 281

[26] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 24 November 1868. *Pol. Proc., 1869*, vol. III, p. 442.

[27] Proclamation by the Rani of Travancore, 3 February 1829. Neet vol. 20, No. 161, pp. 63 - 64. Vide App. I

The Rajas of Travancore were considered in position below the Brahmins.[31] They were the only class exempted from all social and religious disabilities. They enjoyed perfect liberty of action. They were not executed for any offence which they committed and their crimes were not taken into account. Their temples were exclusively for their own worship and the lower classes were not even allowed to touch the outer walls of the temples or even approach them.[32] They opposed tooth and nail the attempt of Ringeltaube to establish the Mission in 1806.[33]

In the social ladder, the Nairs or Sudras were below the Brahmins. They formed the nobility, the magistracy and officials of the government - the military and police, wealthy farmers, the merchants and the skilled artisans. However their main duty was to carry on war.[34] As the ruling class,[35] the Nairs enjoyed a great many privileges. The Nair was expected to cut down instantly an Ezhava, Nadar, or Mukkuva,

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28 Fra Paolino Da San Bartalomeo, *Voyage to the East Indies*, p. 207

29 James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. I, p. 255

30 Abbe J. A. Dubois, *Letters on the State of Christianity in India*, p 57

31 George Norton, *Rudimentals: Being a Series of Discourses Addressed to the Natives of India*, pp. 287 - 88

32 Duarte Barbosa, *A Description of the Coasts of East Africa and Malabar*, p. 121; George Norton, *op. cit.*, p. 283

33 Letter of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, dated Trivandrum, Palace of the King of Travancore, 27 October 1806, No. 29, p 70. (Church History Archives, Microfilm)

34 Duarte Barbosa, *op. cit.*, p. 124

35 The Rajas of Travancore belonged to the class of Nairs.

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who defiled him by touching his person, and a similar fate awaited a Pulaya or a Paraya who did not move away from his path when he passed.[36] The Nairs were exempted from being put in irons for anything which they committed. But those Nairs who dared to speak ill of the king were awarded death penalty.[37] Referring to the position of the Nairs, the missionaries of the L. M. S. in Travancore write:

> As a caste, they rank as the aristocracy of the Country; they have constant and peculiar access to the Rajah; they alone constitute His Highness's Brigade; they monopolise most of the offices of Government and are in fact the mouthpiece and hands of the Sircar throughout the Country.[38]

The National Council of Pidakaikkar, composed of the Nairs of South Travancore, exercised more authority over the southern districts than the government itself. They met once a year at Suchindram in the month of December. Each pidakai or village had to send to this assembly two or three delegates to deliberate on the subtler aspects such as the privileges of their caste and religion and their strict observance. They also discussed in the council whether any class had changed their caste customs. If the council discovered that any individual had violated or trespassed his caste rules, it took the law into its own hands and dealt with him highhandedly.[39] Government often appointed them to restore peace and order in the state.[40]

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36 Walter Hamilton, *The East India Gazetteer, Containing a Description of Hindostan*, vol. II, p. 180

37 Duarte Barbosa, *op. cit.*, p. 129

38 Vide App. VII

39 C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, pp. 568–71

40 Appointment of Pidakaikkar to Prevent Rebellions. Neettu vol. 43, No. 359, p. 311

The conversion of Nairs to Christianity was not viewed favourably. "The King of Travancore", says Bartalomeo, "threatens with imprisonment and death every nobleman who shall quit his court to become a Christian."[41] Like the Brahmins, the Nairs also opposed the spread of Christianity, and thus came into conflict with the L M S. missionaries. The missionaries alleged that the caste Hindus were "perverting justice and monopolising influence in their fovour,"[42] to prevent the spread of Christianity.

The caste Hindu predominance created a condition of general degradation, causing intellectual cultural, and economic stagnation for centuries. The unprivileged or oppressed classes of the population composed of the Nadars, the Ezhavas, the Parayas, the Pulayas etc., were kept by them in perennial subservience, poverty and ignorance. They were systematically excluded from all positions of power, and were subjected to exploitation and humiliation. This attitude of the caste Hindus drove the lower order to the fold of the Proetstant faith, thereby making the Travancore Mission, the 'pride of achivement' of the L. M. S. This social and cultural background is of fundamental importance in assessing the tremendous success of the Mission.

Among the unprivileged classes the lowest were the slaves, composed mainly of the Parayas and the Pulayas. The Parayas believed that they were originally of the same family as the Brahmins. To show their high ancestry they wore a sacred thread like the Brahmins [43] They suffered much under the privileged classes. They were bought and sold like

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[41] Fra Paolino Da San Bartalomeo, *op. cit.*, p. 207

[42] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S. to Sir C. E. Trevelyan, 18 July 1859. *Pol. Proc., 1859*, vol. III, p. 128

[43] George Matthan's Diary, 12 October 1849. *Madras Church Missionary Record, 1850*, pp. 143-44

cattle. Their person and property were entirely at the disposal of their masters, by whom they were ill-treated. "These people are considered" says James Forbes, "so abject as to be employed in the vilest offices, and held in such detestation, that no other tribe will touch them: and those Hindus who commit enormous crimes are excommunicated into this caste which is considered to be a punishment worse than death".[44] The first converts to Protestant Christianity in Travancore were the Parayas.

According to tradition, the Pulayas were the descendants of the aborigines, who were compelled to prefer slavery and food to freedom and starvation.[45] The privileged classes never permitted the Pulayas to touch their bodies and if they accidentally did that, death was the punishment. Says Barbosa: "And whatever woman or man should touch these, their relations immediately kill them like a contaminated thing: and they kill so many of these Pulers until they are weary of it, without any penalty".[46] In cases of indigence a Pulaya was allowed to sell himself as a slave, but for not more than sixty *panams*. If a higher price was received it would be of no use to him, as the proprietor would take the overplus.[47] James Forbes writes:

> The number of poor people who came down to Anjengo and the other seaports, from the inland country during a famine, either to sell themselves or to dispose of their children as slaves is astonishing.[48]

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[44] *Op. cit.*, vol, I, p. 51

[45] Walter Hamilton, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 181

[46] *Op. cit.*, p. 143

[47] Jacob Canter Visscher, *Letters from Malabar*, p. 71

[48] *Op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 261

The eldest born, whether male or female of a Pulaya couple, was the property of the owner of the father, and the other children belonged to the owner of the mother, who had also the right to redeem the first child for the sum of sixteen *panams*, whether the possessor liked it or not.[49] A considerable number of the Pulayas were owned by the government. They were partly employed on government lands and partly rented out to the ryots.[50]

The Parayas and the Pulayas were actual slaves of the soil. The murder of the slave was hardly considered a crime. The deed of transfer was, "You may sell or kill him or her." [51] They were only employed in agriculture and lived in hovels or trees bordering the banks of the fields, so as to keep an eye on the crop after the toils of the day. They were paid in grain, three measures of paddy to a man, two to a woman and one to a child.[52] Harvest was a period of comparative plenty. Lt. P. E. Conner writes:

> Their meagre squalid appearance betrays the insufficiency of their diet, and the extrreme hardships to which both sexes are equally doomed. They have no idea beyond their occupations, are never guilty of violence to their masters, are said to be obedient perhaps from the sluggish apathy of their character, which renders them unmindful of their lot.[53]

As outcastes, they were not permitted to worship the higher order of Hindu deities. They worshipped evil spirits, souls

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[49] Jacob Canter Visscher, *op. cit*, p. 71

[50] P. E. Conner, "Memoir of the Survey of Travancore", *Madras Journal of Literature end Science*, vol. I, (1833-34), p. 5

[51] *Ibid*

[52] *Ibid*

[53] *Ibid*

of their deceased ancestors, etc., to whom groves and altars were dedicated.[54] The slave castes were not allowed to use the public roads. They were to flee and seek shelter in the jungle when a highcaste man approached; hence it was difficult for them to move from one place to another. If they had to work in or near the roads, they were to place leaves as a mark to warn the high caste man of their presence. If a slave were to raise his hand to strike his master or mistress, or otherwise injure them, he might be punished with death.[55]

The social circumstances and daily life of the poor slaves who were constrained to labour for their subsistence or starve if they remained idle, presented a sad picture of the degradation. They worked hard and suffered much from sickness and want of food. In times of scarcity the Vedar women used to go to the jungles to dig up various kinds of wild yams and tubers which they boiled and ate. The Pulayas likewise hunted for crabs, tiny fish, snails, eggs of red ants, the winged white ants, or any thing else to fill their stomachs. The slave women rarely bathed or washed their bodies. Their ornaments were bits of brass, glass beads, and shells. They were not allowed to enter the markets. They were required to carry their pitchers on the head and not on the hip or side. Wells belonging to the caste Hindus were forbidden to the use of lower castes. The low caste women were not allowed to cover their bosoms. The use of umbrellas was prohibited to all castes except the Brahmins. The erection of lofty or large houses was forbidden to all but kings and nobles.

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[54] Samuel Mateer, "Pariah Caste in Travancore", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol. XVI, (1884), pp. 180-96

[55] G. A. Ballard to Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George dated Cochin, 23 April 1870. *Pol. Proc., 1870*, No. 23, pp. 2-4; Circular of V. Ramiengar, Dewan of Travancore, 21 July 1884, *Offical Papers*, pp. 45-46; Francis Day, *The Land of the Permauls*, pp. 326-29

To free themselves from slavery and oppression, the slaves used certain means before the spread of Protestant Christianity. Many Parayas begged the Nambudiri priest visiting Suchindram and other temples in South Travancore to call them his slaves for which they paid him one *panam* a head per annum. This priest conferred upon them benefits and they got justice and proper treatment as a natural corollary. The slaves of a Nambudiri were treated with consideration on account of the sacred position and rank of the master. These Parayas were called 'Potty slaves'.[56] The Pulayas, on the other hand, found in Islam a means of emancipation from their misery and sufferings. A convert to Islam enjoyed all the privileges of the Muslims and the lower castes found it the best way to remove their burdens and enhance their social position. "The untouchables" writes G. M. Moraes, "had nothing to loose but their chains in changing their religion, and gladly accepted the invitation to convert themselves to Islam"[57]

In the social pyramid of Travancore a position below the Nairs and above the slave castes was secured by the two great classes, the Nadars and the Ezhavas. They were half-polluting castes and lived just outside the main villages, in their separate habitations. They were classed among the outcastes. In South Travancore the Nadars formed the majority and in Central and North Travancore the Ezhavas were numerous. The missionaries of the L. M. S. in Travancore concentrated their attention mainly on the Nadars of South Travancore.

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[56] Samuel Mateer, *loc. cit.*

[57] *A History of Christianity in India*, pp. 52-53

The Nadars were described by Caldwell "as belonging to the highest division of the lowest classes or the lowest of the middle classes; poor but not paupers; rude and unlettered, but by many degrees removed from a savage state".[58] They were forbidden to approach within specified polluting distance. "Martyrs to the distinction of castes, they are treated by the higher orders with supercilious scorn: too poor to invite their rapacity, they are held by them in bondage, at least they are awed in to a servitude, mitigated, to be sure, when contrasted to that of the praedial slaves".[59] They were a degraded community suffering for generations from oppression. William Tobias Ringeltaube writes of his first impressions about this community:

> The Shanars are a set of people more robust than other Indians, very dark in complexion, their features completely European, their ears protracted to the shoulders by mighty ornaments of lead. Their habits are extremely simple. They are quarrelsome, avaricious and deceitful.[60]

They were very dirty, ignorant, and of wild appearance. The most prominent feature of their character was downright indolence. Robert Caldwell says:

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[58] Robert Caldwell, *Tinnevelly Shanars*, p. 4. This in-between position was also noted by Rama Rao in the *Ramnad Manual*. They were described as "inferior to Sudras and superior to the Parayas". (p. 36). According to W. H. Dalton, the Nadars form another portion of the great aboriginal Tartar race, which first over-ran the soil of India. (*Missions in India*, p. 95). For details regarding their origin, see H. R. Pate, *Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly*, p. 101

[59] Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 135-36

[60] Ringeltaube's Journal, 19 June 1806. William Robinson (ed.) *Ringeltaube, The Rishi: Letters and Journals*, p. 69; *R. E. H. T. M.* p. 141

They cannot bear to make experiments, or calculate possibilities of advantage; they cannot bear the trouble of thinking. It is their custom to idle away half their time, to do their work in a clumsy, wasteful manner, to be contended with the trade and position of life with which their forefathers were content to be, always in debt and to live from hand to mouth.[61]

The social conditions of the Nadars were deplorable in the beginning of the nineteenth century. To mark their degradation their women were forbidden to wear any clothing above the waist. They were not allowed to carry umbrellas, to use roads, wear shoes and golden ornaments, carry pots of water on the hip, build houses above one storey in height, milk cows or even use the ordinary language of the country. They were obliged to render *oozhiyam*[62] to the government and the privileged classes.[63] They were also subjected to heavy taxation.[64]

The distinguishing feature of their religion was the direct worship of demons.[65] "Demonism", Caldwell says, "in one shape or another may be said to rule the Shanars with

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[61] Robert Caldwell, *op. cit.*, p. 38

[62] *Oozhiyam* service was a type of conscripted labour. The unprivileged classes were asked to work or to carry burdens for the government, temples, or for the privileged classes. For this work usually no wages were paid. There were two types of *oozhiyam* service; forced manual labour and free supply of articles such as vegetables, provisions, etc. This service was a form of acute harassment to the lower classes. The force behind this system was the coercive authority and power of the government and privileged classes.

[63] Oozhiyam - Exemption to Christians, 8 Kanni 997 M. E. (September, 1825. Neettu vol. 15, No. 29, p. 30.

[64] Nadars, Ezhavas, etc., Talayara and other taxes, 20 Chingam 995 (September 1820). Neettu vol. 13, No. 60, p. 64

[65] W. H, Dalton, *op. cit.*, p. 97

undisputed authority".[66] These demons were known as *pey, putam* and *pisachu*.[67] The character of the demons was believed to be invariably composed of malignity and hatred toward mankind. To these demons they built no temples. The architectural tribute generally made in their honour was that of a pyramid of mud, plastered and white-washed, with the figure of a devil in front. A better kind of building was a small thatched shed, open in front, and containing some half a dozen idols of demons. Many of these figures were representations of Bhadrakali, the tutelary deity of the community. The structures made to house their gods were generally known as *pey-kovils*.[68] The ***Amman kovil*** or temple of goddess, was central to every Nadar settlement. The principal devil temple was situated at Agastisvaram, the head quarters of the Nadar tribe in Travancore.[69]

The offerings usually presented to their gods were of various kinds including most of the articles of food and drink which people relished. Animal sacrifices and dancing were presented to the gods on special occasions to secure their favour. The person appointed to offer a sacrifice to the devil was styled as the 'devil-dancer'. Devil dancing was generally held in the night. At the end of the dance the devil dancer was much venerated by those assembled, who generally worshipped him like a deity.

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[66] Robert Caldwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-13

[67] *L. C.*, pp. 193 - 94

[68] W. H. Dalton, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98. Bhadrakali is the tutelary deity of the Nadar community. She represents the malignant aspect of the wife of Siva and is believed to inflict epidemics of small - pox and cholera. "Our Home in Wilderness, Recollection of North Tinnevelly". *Church Missionary Gleaner*, vol. VI, (April, 1879), p. 40

[69] *L. C.*, p. 219

The Nadars in general were industrious, simple-minded, rude, unskilled and somewhat coarse in their behaviour and habits. But they were neither devoid of shrewdness nor insensible to kindness, though long oppression had rendered them suspicious and covetous.[70] They lacked communal self-awareness. This consciousness began to emerge, however, in the early nineteenth century with the community's struggle to uplift itself by taking advantage of the new educational opportunities offered by the missionaries. A major portion of the Protestant Christians were recruited from this suppressed community. With the spread of Protestant Christianity among them, they made great progress in intelligence, civilization and morals, and built up a strong movement within the community for gaining their long-denied rights and freedom.

The whole system of taxation was arbitrary, unscientific and barbarous, in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The burden of taxes mainly fell on the unprivileged classes. The most severe was the poll-tax.[71] The Nadars, Ezhavas, and the Christians were compelled to pay it.[72] Fees were levid on low castes for marriages. *Purushantaram*, a tax of about 25 per cent was levied by the

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[70] George Pettitt, *The Tinnevelly Mission of the C. M. S.*, pp. 482-505

[71] Poll-tax was a capitation tax first imposed in 1754 on the Nadars by Raja Martanda Varma to meet the increased military expenditure,

[72] The Nadars suffered much from this poll-tax. They paid it not only for those who were alive, but also for the dead. To escape from paying this excessive tax several Nadar families migrated to Tinnevelly. The revenue accounts of Travancore for 1807 - 8 show that the government collected Rs. 88, 044 as poll - tax from the Nadars and the Ezhavas; while from Chetties and other castes the amount collected was only Rs. 4624. Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St, George, 14 April 1818. For. Pol, Proc , Fort William, 17 July 1818, No, 20, p. 69

government on all heritable property.[73] They were subjected to a large number of taxes; the meanest tax was *kuppakazhcha*, a levy for each hut.[74] The lower classes were to pay tax for the hair they grew, and for the breasts of ladies called breast-tax.[75] The way in which these taxes were collected antagonized the people more than the tax itself. The Administration Report of Travancore for 1865-66 gives a list of 110 distinct taxes, which were in that year abolished by the government to relieve the poor tax payers. These taxes were to the downtrodden "a source of vexation and embarrassment".[76] "These demands" says T. Madhava Row, Dewan of Travancore (1858-1872), "were of the most uncertain character, involved a good deal of oppression and vexation and interfered with the freedom which industry of all kinds is entitled to"[77]

Justice was administered according to the caste norms. Very severe punishments were usually inflicted on criminals. Simple imprisonment was not so much resorted to, but practised cruelt orture to force confession, mutilation, impalement and other punishments, for theft, unchastity, killing of cows, and other minor offences. Death punishment was common.[78] Heavy fines and confiscation of property were also resorted to.[79] Legal suits were tried according to old customs *viva voce*. No lengthy proceedings were required to obtain the final verdict. In obscure cases the Raja consulted the Brahmins. Dubious cases in which no proof was available were decided through the instrumentation of solemn oaths.[80] These extraordinary oaths resembled the trials by ordeal existed in ancient Europe. It was against this political and social background that the missionaries of the L. M. S. were called to work.

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[73] Ward and Conner, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-4

[74] Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, 14 April 1818. For. Pol, Proc., Fort William, 17 July 1818, No. 20, pp. 95-96; Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p.292

[75] An Ezhava lady of Chertalai, unable to bear the humiliation and rapacity of the tax collectors, in collecting breast tax, cut off one of he breasts and presented it to them. N. R. Krishnan, *Ezhavar Innaleyum Innum* (Malayalam), pp. 175-80

[76] Administration Report of Travancore for the year 1865 - 66. Quoted by Samuel Mateer, *op. cit* , p. 292

[77] *Ibid.*, p. 293

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, when the missionaries landed in this territory, they were surprised to see this beautiful state, where a self-seeking minority oppressed a large hard working majority. The code of law was framed without any sense of justice and the masses were groaning in bondage. The history of the 'liberation' of the unprivileged masses started with the activities of the missionaries of the L. M. S.

Christianity was not a new religion to Travancore at the turn of the nineteenth century. In India, Travancore has the unique privilege of having a Christian community from a very early date. This community of St. Thomas, otherwise called Syrian Christians,[81] who gained certain rights and privileges from the local kings, enjoyed an exalted position in socieey. They gradually became a non-missionary church.[82] They did not disturb the social order of the society. At the turn of the century we see them in a lamentable state. Dr. Claudius Buchanan, who visited Travancore in 1806 to investigate on the general state of the Christian religion, its followers, and its churches, found the St. Thomas Christians in total disarray. He "perceived all round symptoms of poverty and political depression" and breathed the "air of fallen greatness".[83] The ancient privileges they had enjoyed in society were things of the past and nobody paid any heed to conventional rules of social intercourse. Their priest told Buchanan:

> The Hindoo Princes never touched our liberty of conscience. We were formerly on a footing with them in political power; and they respect our religion. We have also converts from time to time; but in this Christian duty we are not so active as we once were; besides it is not so creditable now to become Christian, in our low caste.[84]

All missionary operations were viewed by the government with suspicion. The Catholic Church was firmly established in Travancore in the sixteenth century, and their missionaries from time to time converted large numbers to the faith, sometimes transgressing the boundaries of caste. When

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[78] Fra Bartalomeo gives an instance of severe punishment inflicted on a Nadar. He says: "At Quilon, I saw a native of the caste of the Shanars hanging on a gallows for having stolen three coconuts from the house of a Nayar. The *corpus delicti* was suspended from his neck, in order that it might serve as a warning to all passengers". *Ibid.*, pp. 299-91

[79] Duarte Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 - 117

[80] For details regarding different types of ordeals, see Jacob Canter Visscher, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-69; Duarte Barbosa, *op. cit.*, pp. 116 - 118.

[81] They are called Syrian Christians because their churches were under the supervision of the Syrian bishops and they used the Syrian language for their church rites.

[82] G. M. Moraes, *op.cit.*, pp. 293-95

[83] Rev. Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Reserches in Asia*, p. 98

[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

rare cases of conversion from privileged classes were reported, the government employed means to check the work of proselytism among Hindu subjects.[85] Those who were converted from the privileged classes were treated very badly. Neelam Pillai, an officer of a noble family, was shot at Aruvamozhi, because he refused to renounce the Christian religion. In the year 1787 four Nairs were thrown into prison at Trivandrum because they would not apostatize from the Catholic Church. They were tortured with hunger and thirst and even scourged twice a day. These heinous acts of the government having failed, the four captive Nairs were atlast transported beyond the boundaries of Tovala.[86] In 1780, Nagam Pilla, a Dewan of Travancore, commenced persecution against the Catholic converts of the Nadar caste to induce them to worship Vishnu.[87]

Christians suffered also from their Hindu neighbours, who forced them to attend celebrations and festivals in honour of the Hindu gods. Christian women, who refused to be present, were physically dragged to the scene, for which act ancient custom was invoked by the Hindus as an excuse.[88] The Christian converts were baptized by the missionaries only during the night to avoid giving any occasion to the magistrates to make complaints against them. If a missionary was afraid to baptize a Christian, the catechuman was sent to Varappuzha. or some other congregation under the Dutch Government.[89] The Roman Catholic fisher women were

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[85] Rev. Thomas Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, p. 215

[86] Fra Paolino Da San Bartalomeo, *op. cit.*, p. 207-8

[87] Rev. Thomas Whitehouse, *op. cit.*, p. 223. Whitehouse says that about 20,000, Nadars left their houses and fled to the mountains to escape persecution.

[88] *Ibid.*, p. 216

[89] Fra Paloino Da San Bartalomeo, *op.cit.*, pp. 20–34.

not permitted to cover their bosoms with jackets. They were only allowed to tie a long cloth across the bosom.[90] The oppression and injustice shown to the Christians was such that the Synod of Diamper requested the King of Portugal to take all the Christians of the bishopric under his favour and protection.[91]

Excepting the Syrian Christians, all those who were converted by the Roman Catholic Church were of the lowest group of Hindus, none being higher than the Nadar or the Ezhava. Only a few Nairs and Brahmins adopted the Christian religion. The low castes embraced the religion mainly to receive some facilities and privileges.[92] Bartalomeo writes:

> Their view on these occasions generally is to marry some Christian, to shun the persecution of some despotic ruler, to avoid a law suit, or to live in a happier manner under the Dutch Government.[93]

Protestant Christianity was first introduced in Travancore at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Maharasan, a native of Mailadi in South Travancore, played a key role in founding Protestantism in Travancore.[94] He was converted by John Caspar Kohlhoff, a Danish missionary at Tanjore,[95] when he visited the place to see some of his relatives, and named him Vedamanikkam, meaning the gem of the Bible. The introduction of Protestantism is in striking constrast to the evangelization of Kerala by Catholic and Syrian faiths at the instance of foreign ecclesiastics. Vedamanikkam retained the spirit of Christianity even after his return to Travancore and as a result of his efforts a small group of Protestant Christians was formed at Mailadi.[96] Owing to severe opposition from orthodox Hindus the early efforts at proselytisation did not produce the desired effects. But the interference of Col. Macaulay changed the whole situation. Claudius Buchanan writes of the change thus:

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[90] Samuel Mateer, *op. cit.*, p. 200

[91] James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, vol. II, p. 682

[92] Jacob Canter Visscher, *op. cit.*, p. 113

[93] *Op. cit.*, p. 204

[94] W H. Dalton, *op. cit.*, pp. 102 - 3. Maharasan belonged to the Paraya caste.

[95] Tranquebar was the first centre of Protestant Christian activities in India. In the year 1705 the King of Denmark resolved to send some missionaries to Tranquebar. From that year it became a flourishing Christian centre. Christian missionary activities spread from Tranquebar to Tanjore and other places. Philipps, *Thirty Four Conferences Between the Danish Missionaries and the Malabarian Bramans in the East Indies* pp. xviii - xix

> The Brahmins and the present minister had taught the young man (the Raja) to oppress the Christians. But he promises milder treatment in future. This favourable change is produced by the exertion of Colonel Macaulay, the Resident, who, I am happy to say, is much alive to the interests of religion.[97]

In England in the last decades of the eighteenth century there was an evangelical revival, and several ardent Christians thought of propagating the gospel among the Hindus. Every Christian considered it his duty to employ all the means in his power to spread the gospel both at home and abroad.[98] One of the first results of this great change was the foundation of the London Missionary Society in 1795 with its sole object, "to spread the knowledge of Christ among heathen and other unenlightened nations."[99] This movement attracted thousands of people.

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[96] *R. E. H. T. M.*, p. 112

[97] Letter of Buchanan, dated Cochin, 24 December 1806. Jacob Cante Visscher, *op. cit.*, p 191

[98] Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society 1795-1895*, vol. I p. 12

[99] *Ibid.*, p. 30

At this time the necessity of an ecclesiastical establishment for British India was widely discussed. Several enlightened Cristians advocated strongly that missionaries should be allowed to spread the gospel in India. William Wilberforce raised his voice in the British Parliament in fovour of India's evangelization through missionary efforts. At the time of the renewal of the Company's Charter in 1793, he made a heroic but unsuccessful attempt to include a favourable clause in the Charter Act of that year to facilitate the work of Christian Missions in India.[100] Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, championed the cause in the House of Lords. He pressed the matter for the consideration of those in power.[101] He wrote to Dr. Claudius Buchanan on 14 May, 1806:

> The wisdom of British policy, the equity of its *jurisprudence*, the impartiality of its laws, the humanity of its penal code, and above all, the incorrupt administration of public justice will when they are well understood, make the Indians our willing subjects, and induce them to adopt a religion attended with such consequences to the dearest interests of the human mind. They will rejoice in having exchanged the tyranny of pagan superstition, and the despotism of their native princes, for the mild mandates of Christianity, and the stable authority of equitable laws.[102]

As a result, a favourable attitude toward Christian missionary activities in India was created.

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[100] Julius Richter, *A History of Missions in India*, p. 150. The attempt of Wilberforce to include a favourable clause in the Charter Act of 1793 failed largely due to the organized opposition of powerful men like Henry Dundas, who were for the progress of commerce and not Christianity.

[101] Dr. Claudius Buchanan, *op. cit.*, p. 251

[102] Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, to Dr. Claudius Buchanan, dated Calgarth - Park, Kendal, 14 May 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 255

The original design and persistent aim of the London Missionary Society was as far as means and opportunity should afford, to "preach the Gospel to every creature"[103] The success of its Mission in the South Seas and the increased facilities at the disposal of the Directors of the Society, made them focus their attention on the vast continent of India.[104] The Danish missionaries of Tranquebar, hearing of the missionary enterprises undertaken by the L.M.S., requested its Directors to send missionaries to labour in this part of India. In a letter to the Directors of the L.M.S. in December 1799, the Danish missionaries wrote:

> Most happy we should find ourselves, if your Ministers should also come in our vicinity; we should embrace them as Brethren in Christ, and be with them of one spirit. [105]

The Directors realising the grand missionary prospects in India, decided to send out three agents of the gospel, namely, Rev. Messrs. Ringeltaube, Des Granges, and Cran. They were sent to Tranqueber, the first scene of Protestant missionary activities in India, where they were expected to form future plans after consulation with the influential Christian friends there. But the ultimate decision regarding the choice of stations was left to the missionaries themselves.[106] They reached Tranquebar on 5 December, 1804.[107] The most pious and influential Christians at Madras took pains to persuade every missionary landing at Madras to work in Travancore for spiritual and temporal welfare of the people there.[108] The local believers were willing to accept a European missionary.[109] Thus the ground was prepared for the Protestant missionary work in Travancore.

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103 *L. C.*, p. 257

104 *Ibid*

105 Quoted by C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 464

106 Richard Lovett, *op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 18-19; *L. C.*, pp. 258 - 70

107 *Ibid*

108 C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 471 - 72

109 *L. C.*, p. 260

CHAPTER II

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TRAVANCORE MISSION

1806–1816

The real founder of the Travancore Mission of the L.M.S. was a Prussian by name William Tobias Ringeltaube[1] who started his gospel campaign on 25 April 1806.[2] He was the first Protestant missionary to set foot in Travancore. The day is a memorable one in the annals of Travancore in general and Christianity in particular.

Since his arrival at Tranquebar on 5 December 1864, Ringeltaube had been lured by the prospects of spreading

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1 Born in 1770 at Scheidelwitz, in the south of Prussia, Ringeltaube studied at the University of Halle and was ordained to the ministry at Wernigerodu in 1796. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge sent him to Calcutta as missionary. But within a year he abandoned the Mission and came to England in 1799. While in England, he advocated the cause of the Hindus in India. In 1803 he accepted the invitation of the L. M. S. to form part of the proposed mission to India. Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795 - 1895*, vol. II, p. 21; *R. E. H. T. M.*, p. 123

2 Ringeltaube's Journal, 25 April 1806. William Robinson, *Ringeltaube The Rishi: Letters and Journals*, p. 98

the Christian message in the extreme south of the peninsula. He was reluctant to work in the cities where Europeans resided. He himself notes:

> The missions cannot be so well carried on in great towns where Europeans reside, as they sometimes counteract the pious labours of the missionary. In short, I would not make up my mind to go to Madras or Seringapatam.[3]

His desire was to labour in the southern parts from where, he believed, he could convert a large number of people to Christianity. So he remained in Tranquebar and studied Tamil, the local language.[4] Ringeltaube wrote to the Treasurer of the Society on 29 January, 1805:

> As soon as I am sufficiently advanced in the language I mean to proceed to the southward, if the Lord pleases, knowing of what importance for our society it is there that we should meet with a speedy success; and there, behold, the fields are white for the harvest.[5]

Vedamanikkam, the harbinger of Protestantism in Travancore, launched his missionary efforts in the teeth of severe

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[3] Ringeltaube's Journal, 21 January 1805. *Ibid.*, p. 90. Ringeltaube points out the difficulties of missionary work in towns in a letter to a friend of his in London. He writes: "Long experience has taught me that in large towns, especially where many Europeans are, the Gospel makes but little impression. Superstition is there too powerfully established, and the example of Europeans too baneful". Ringeltaube to R. C. London, dated Palayamkotta, 11 September 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 96

[4] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Tranquebar, 4 October 1805. *Ibid.*, p. 66; *L. C.*, p. 259. The brethren Augustus Des Granges and G. Cran, who reached Tranquebar with him, left the place for Vizagapatam to work there.

[5] Ringeltaube to the Treasurer of the L. M. S., 29 January 1805. *R.E.H.T.M.*, p. 124

opposition from caste Hindus. As Christianity began to spread, his Hindu neighbours persecuted him and the handful of new converts to such an extent that he visited Tanjore to meet John Caspar Kohlhoff, the Danish missionary, and appealed to him to send a European missionary to meet the challenge.[6] Kohlhoff informed him of Ringeltaube, who was then studying Tamil in Tranquebar to equip himself for his missionary crusade. Kohlhoff suggested to Vedamanikkam to meet Ringeltaube and convince him of the problems encumbering the Christians at Mailadi. Delighted at the news, Vedamanikkam proceeded to Tranquebar to meet Ringeltaube. This meeting was the turning point in the life of Ringeltaube. Referring to the event Ringeltaube wrote to his sister Anna on 5 August 1805:

> For a long time I could not decide where to go, and I constantly named this matter in prayer before God. At last an old man came to me from that country, Travancore, and told me there were two hundred people in his village who greatly desired to become Christians, but there was none to teach them. I thought of Paul's Macedonian 'Come over and help me' and at once made up my mind to go to them with God's assistance.[7]

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[6] William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Mrs. Murray Mitchell, *In South India*, p. 185

[7] Ringeltaube to Anna, 5 August 1805. William Robinson, *op.cit.*, p. 51. The catechists and the priests from Tranquebar, who visited the southern, point of India from Palayamkotta and Manappar down to Cape Comorin in the last decades of the eighteenth century had often written to Tranquebar to send a resident missionary to those areas for propagating the religion. But the missionaries at Tranquebar did not direct their attention to these areas because of the lack of missionaries. J, Ferd Fenger, *History of the Tranquebar Mission*, pp. 192 - 96; Philipps, *Thirty Four Conferences Between the Danish Missionaries and the Malabarian Bramans*, pp. 346 - 41

Ringeltaube told Vedamanikkam that he would com to Travancore as soon as he had learned Tamil.[8]

In the meanwhile news reached Ringeltaube of th outrages committed on Christian converts of Tinnevelly b the Hindus and Muslims of that area. A gentleman b name Gratian of Manappar in the Tinnevelly district through a letter to his friend at Tranquebar dated 8 June 1805 requested Ringeltaube "to come hither as soon a possible. Then tranquillity would be restored and future molestation prevented."[6] This letter left a deep impression in Ringeltaube's mind, especially when he received a full account of the travails of the Christians grovelling under the tyranny of the tax collectors.[10] He was so much moved by the sufferings of the Christians of Tinnevelly that he resolved to go to Palayamkotta[11] and work there.

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8 *R. E H. T. M.*, p. 130

9 Letter dated 8 June 1805, in Ringeltaube's Journal, 4 October 1805, *Ibid.*, p. 131

10 "They (the Christians) are" writes Ringeltaube, "frequently driven from their homes, put in the stocks, and exposed for a fortnight together to the heat of the raging sun and the chilling dews of the night - all because there is no European missionary to bring their complaints to the ear of the Government". *Ibid*

11 Part of the city of Tinnevelly. Ringeltaube carried on active evangelistic work in Tinnevelly with Palayamkotta as his centre in his beginning years. Ringeltaube himself writes of the Tinnevelly Mission in his Journal of 12 September, 1806; "The scene of this mission lies in the south of the peninsula, and within the triangle between Palamkottah and Tuticorin, and that ghaut of Travancore called the Aramboly Ghaut: the chief branch of it embraces a numerous part of the Shanar tribe, a people who live from the produce of the palmyra trees". Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 12 September 1806. William Robinson, *op. cit.* p. 80

Though he was a missionary of the L. M. S., he took temporary charge of the Tinnevelly Mission, which belonged to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and continued his efforts to found a Mission in South Travancore under the auspices of the L.M.S.[12]

While in Tinnevelly, Ringeltaube came into contact with the Nadars, who were very numerous there and in Travancore. He was astonished at their sufferings and privation. He writes:

> If they have families, they can scarcely afford to buy a little palmyra sugar to satisfy the cravings of nature. My heart bleeds for them...[13]

In Travancore at that time there were many Catholic churches, but not a single Protestant church.[14] Says Ringeltaube:

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12 *Ibid.*, pp. 61 - 62; *R. E. H. T. M.*, p. 137. The S. P. C. K. laboured in a large area extending from the vicinity of Tranquebar on the East Coast to Cape Comorin in the extreme south. The missionary J. C. Kohlhoff frequently lamented his inability to superintend all the congregations which were scattered throughout such a vast area. When he found that the new missionary Ringeltaube was free to labour wherever he thought he could make himself useful, he made certain proposals to him. By this arrangement, the Tinnevelly Mission of the S. P. C. K. was left in the temporary charge of Ringeltaube, in the name and to the responsibility of Kohlhoff; but at the same time it was agreed that Ringeltaube was at liberty to establish an independent Mission in Travancore.

13 Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 12 September 1806. William Robinson, *op. cit.*, pp. 81 - 82

14 Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Tranquebar, 4 October 1805. *Ibid.*, p. 66

> To be useful as soon as possible was my leading view, leaving to those of my dear brethren who are younger than myself the more glorious and arduous task of carrying the Gospel where hitherto no Protestant misionaries came.[15]

His thoughts were always with the small band of Christians under Vedamanikkam struggling for survival at Mailadi and the establishment of a Mission in Travancore.[16] At last he decided to work among them.

Thereon Ringeltaube applied for a passport to enter the area.[17] Col. Colin Macaulay procured for him the passport and offered to defray his travelling expenses.[18] No sooner had he set foot in Travancore than he experienced that bitterness of the prevailing customs. When the travel-weary Ringeltaube entered a rest house to relax for a while, the local magistrate sent word to him that the place was meant only for Brahmins and asked him to vacate it forthwith.[19] He reluctantly obeyed and proceeded to the village of Mailadi to meet Vedamanikkam and the Christians there. His early days in Mailadi were spent in the huts of the Parayas contending himself with such amenities as they could provide.[20] They brought their grievances to him. Ringeltaube writes: "They begged hard for

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[15] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 19 June 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 68

[16] Ringeltaube to Ernst, dated Tranquebar, 30 January 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 51

[17] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 13 to 22 March 1806 *Ibid,*, p, 77

[18] *L. C.*, p. 261

[19] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 13 to 22 March 1806, William Robinson, *op. cit.* p. 78

[20] I. H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore 1806 - 1906*, p. 22

a native teacher, but declared that they could not build a church, as all this country had been given by the king of Travancore to the Brahmins, inconsequence of which the magistates would not give them permission"[21] To mitigate their sufferings Ringeltaube interceded with the local magistrate and prevailed upon him to ensure some relief.[22]

Ringeltaube then set out for Cochin to meet Col Macaulay for getting his help to obtain sanction from the Raja to erect a church at Mailadi.[23] Macaulay received him with open arms and promised to exert his influence to get sanction from the Raja for building a Protestant church at Mailadi. He also expressed his willingness to bear the cost of the church proposed to be built.[24] On his return journey he met the Dewan, Velu Tampi, at Quilon and solicited government sanction for the project. But the Dewan told him frankly that it could not be sanctioned, as it militated against established customs.[25] Although the Dewan cold shouldered the request, Ringeltaube did not lose hope because he was confident of the Resident's influence at the court of the Raja.

Caste Hindu opposition to the erection of a church at Mailadi was so great that even Macaulay's intercession

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[21] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 19 June 1806. William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 78

[22] *Ibid.*, p. 79

[23] Letter of Ringeltaube, dated Palayamkotta, 11 September 1809. *Ibid*, p. 95; Letter of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, dated Trivandrum, Palace of the King of Travancore, 27 October 1806. No. 29, pp. 70 - 71. (Microfilm, Church History Archives)

[24] C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 502

[25] *L. C.*, p. 262

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proved of no avail. Dr. Claudius Buchanan was deputed by the Government of India to visit the ancient Syrian churches of Travancore and report on their condition, their tenets and faith, and recommend measures for their improvement. He had also to report upon the general state of Christianity in this coast, and thus came into contact with the Protestant Christians of Mailai.[26] They requested him to obtain the long-awaited consent of the Raja to build a church.[27] Buchanan requested the Raja to grant them permission and allot the ground to erect the same. Buchanan writes:

> At last the Rajah told me, he would himself soon visit the district of Moilady and would then point out a proper place for the church. The Brahmins, I first heard opposed the measure alleging that, the English would soon have the country if they were allowed to introduce the religion into it.[28]

The request was not granted. Ringeltaube, finding his efforts prove futile, finally left Travancore for Palayamkotta, to visit the churches there and to propagate the gospel.[29]

Col. Macaulay felt that he was insulted by the Dewan and the Raja by withholding permission for the erection of the proposed church at Mailadi. Moreover, the Dewan also had become callously indifferent to the instructions

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[26] Letter of Dr. Claudius Buchanan, dated Trivandrum, Palace of the King of Travancore, 27 October 1806. No. 29, p. 70

[27] Ibid. Buchanan writes about the Christians at Mailadi: "At this moment there is not one Protestant church in the whole kingdom of Travancore or Malabar. The Christians at Moilady near Collale or 'Cottonia are 120 in number an auspicious beginning".

[28] Ibid., pp. 70-71

[29] L. C, pp. 262-68

given by the Resident after the conclusion of the treaty of 1805. This to the Resident presented a very dismal prospect and the end of everything that he wanted to achieve through the Dewan. The Resident, Col. Macaulay, writes:

> A Dewan of this country who should fancy himself managing a separate interest seems from that instant to have placed himself in a state of hostility to both parties, to the Raja, no less than to the British Government.[30]

To Velu Tampi, the Christians were an anathema because their issue had brought upon him the displeasure of the Resident. The hapless and bankrupt condition to which Mattu Tarakan was reduced serves as a standing witness to Tampi's retributive measures.[31] Tarakan complained of the matter to Macaulay and made him believe that the insults showered on him were due to his being a Christian.[32] Macaulay, the ardent supporter of Christians, decided to prevent the injustice. In the exchanges that were made between the Resident and the Dewan, the latter made it clear that the former had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the state.[33] The Resident thereupon decided to crush the Dewan. "I will not allow you" wrote the Resident to the Dewan on 12 May, 1807, "from motives of

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[30] For. Sec. Cons., 2 January 1809. No. 30

[31] In 1799 Velu Tampi insulted Mattu Tarakan by cutting off his ears and putting him in stocks for arrears of revenue, and orders were given to confiscate his property. It has been said that a pair of ears made of gold was given to him by the Raja, to make - up for the insult after the incident. M. O. Joseph, *Mattu Tarakan* (Malayalam), p. 39

[32] T. K. Velu Pillai, *Velu Tampi Dalava* (Malayalam), pp. 65-67

[33] *Ibid*

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base enmity to crush any man (though your subject or dependent) if I can possibly and honourably prevent it".[34]

Ringeltaube came back to Mailadi on 30 February, 1807, and baptized forty persons. He made the converts promise that they would perform the traditional government services, and obey the king and the magistrates as before.[35] He exhorted them "to waive all views of temporal advantage by profession of Christianity, and not to imagine that they would be exempt from the cross, or discharged from the obligation of their relative duties."[36] Now Ringeltaube asked Vedamanikkam to build a small prayer home or chapel near his house till the sanction for the permanent church was given. Vedamanikkam, raising funds from the new converts, constructed a small chapel there to conduct the liturgy, Holy Communion, and baptize people.[37]

In August 1807 Ringeltaube severed his connection with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and settled in Travancore with a view to devoting his sole attention to the expansion of the Mission at Mailadi. Though he put up his residence temporarily at Udayagiri,[38] he moved to

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[34] Col. Macaulay to Velu Tampi, 12 May 1807. P. Shungoony Menon *A History of Travancore*. p. 330

[35] Ringeltaube's Journal, 30 February 1807. William Robinson, *op. cit.* p. 83; L. C, p 263

[36] James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, vol. IV, p. 281

[37] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 518-19

[38] Udayagiri is famous for its fort. It is situated alongside the main southern road, running south-east and leading to Tinnevelly. Ringeltaube resided here for about three years. His first letters on the Travancore Mission were written from Udayagiri

Mailadi when a permanent church was built there.[39] Ringeltaube continued to work in the southern division of Travancore, paying occasional visits to Palayamkotta and other places in the Tinnevelly area, till his final departure from India in 1816.

The subsidy to the British Government had been raised to eight lakhs of rupees by the treaty of 1805 and it was a strain on the resources of the state. When the subsidy fell due, Col. Macaulay ordered its immediate payment after obtaining the sanction of the Governor-in Council.[40] It was of no avail. Thus the nonpayment of the subsidy formed a convenient pretext for the Resident to wreak his vengeance on the intractable Dewan.[41] To prevent the further spread of Christianity and to subvert the British authority, Velu Tampi in his turn decided to murder the Resident, whom he hated like a scourge.[42] This resulted in the Travancore rebellion of 1809. Velu Tampi had addressed secret letters to the kings and chieftains of the neighbouring kingdoms to stir up a general commotion in the land in the name of religion. A letter of his addressed to the Zamorin of Calicut in January 1809 smacks of his fear about the extension of Christian faith in Travancore.[43]

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[39] Ringeltaube's Journal, 23 August 1807. *R. E. H. T. M.*, p. 166

[40] G. Buchan, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, to Col Macaulay, 25 February 1807. Pol. Cons., Vol. 25, Fort St. George. 24 February 1807.

[41] For. Sec. Cons., 2 January 1809, No. 41

[42] R. Narayana Panikkar, *History of Travancore* (Malayalam), p. 257; *T. S. M.*, vol. I. p. 429; V. L. Sastri (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the Madras Presidency and the Adjacent States*, p. 215

[43] Velu Tampi to the Zamorin Raja of Calicut, 20 Dhanu 984 M. E. (January, 1809). Malabar District Records, vol. 8593, (Secret Department), pp. 203-14

He apprehended that the Hindus and Mussalmans would "be compelled to acknowledge and observe the faith of Christians and to pay them allegiance."[44] This letter was handed over to the Collector of Malabar by the Zamorin's minister and passed it on to the Governor of Madras.[45]

Velu Tampi nevertheless managed to excite some ferment among the people by appealing to their sense of patriotism, liberty, religion and loyalty to the throne. A proclamation issued by him on 16 January, 1809 show his intense hatred toward the Christians:

> ... The English will ... get low caste people to inflict heavy punishments for slight faults, put up crosses and Christian flags in pagodas, compel intermarriages with Brahmin women, without reference to caste or creed and practice all the unjust and unlawful things that characterize Kaliyuga...[46]

When the situation became tense the Dewan perpetrated a series of atrocities on the Christians. On C. M. Agur's estimate, nine priests and upwards of 3,000 Christians were maimed, tortured, butchered and thrown into the backwaters. The poor Christians of Mailadi in the south were unhurt as they had fled to the mountains to hide themselves.[47]

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[44] Ibid

[45] It is clear that the underlying cause for the breach in the friendly relations between Velu Tampi and Col. Macaulay, which culminated in the revolt of 1809, was actually religious - the refusal of the Dewan to grant permission to dedicate a church at Mailadi and convert people freely to Christianity. Details of the rebellion are given in my article "Travancore Rebellion-Its Anti-Christian Origin", *Journal of Kerala Studies* vol. I, (July 1973), pp. 91 - 103

[46] For a full text of the proclamation, see P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 339 - 43

[47] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 536 - 37

The rebellion was however crushed and the British became paramount in Travancore. Internal peace was established. This very much aided the rapid progress of Christianity.

Vedamanikkam reported the news of the British success to Ringeltaube, who had escaped to Palayamkotta when the rebellion started.[48] He came back to Mailadi and proceeded to Quilon where he met Macaulay, and once again applied for the long-denied permission to build the first permanent Protestant church. Through the kind offices of Col. Macaulay, Ringeltaube received permission from the Raja to reside at Mailadi, contiguous to the province of Tinnevelly, and to erect a church there. In 1809 the foundation of the church was laid in Vedamanikkam's ground by Ringeltaube. The construction of the church was completed in four months. Ringeltaube made Vedamanikkam a catechist and a paid agent of the Mission.[49]

Wonderful strides were made in the spreading of the gospel. Vedamanikkam zealously preached in Tamarakulam, Puttalam, and Ittamozhi. As a result of his teachings in these places several people were converted and small congregations were formed. When Ringeltaube heard of this he visited Puttalam, and teachers were appointed to instruct those who were converted. In the beginning of 1810, when the work was progressing tremendously, Ringeltaube got permission from the Travancore Government to build more churches.[50] They were constructed and dedicated at Tamarakulam, Puttalam, Attikkadu, Kovilvilai, Ittamozhi,

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[48] James Hough, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 280 - 81

[49] M. A. Sherring, *The History of Protestant Missions in India*, p. 299; James Hough, *op. cit*, vol. IV, p. 280; William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 101

[50] Ringeltaube to Anna, dated Udayagiri in Travancore, 1 November 1810 *Ibid.*, p. 103

Anandanadankudiyiruppu, and Pichaikudiyiruppu.[51] A Attikkadu, the congregation multiplied so fast that h found it necessary to enlarge the church. At the end o the year there were about 400 batized Christians.[52]

Col. John Munro, who succeeded Macaulay as Resident, continued in the foot-steps of his predecessor. On 16 November, 1810 Raja Balarama Varma died and was succeeded by Rani Lakshmi Bai (1811 - 1815), who owed much to the English for her elevation to the throne.[53] Therefore she entrusted the administration of the country to Col. Munro. Travancore now entered upon a rare period of peace and prosperity.[54] This marked a turning point in the history of Christianity in Travancore.

The missionary work in the succeeding years progressed stupendously under Ringeltaube. Through acts of personal benefaction he gathered all the poor people: the sick, the suffering, the widows, and the orphans. The most destitute among them dined and lived with him. The sick were sent to doctors. He distributed medicine *gratis*. Many slaves were redeemed from bondage. He visited the most degraded and helped them within his limitations.[55]

The new religion of Ringeltaube, a religion founded equally on precept and practice, appealed greatly to those

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[51] Ringeltaube to Col. John Munro, dated Quilon, 30 March 1813. Pol. Cons., Fort St, George, 27 October *1818*, No. 9, pp, *1872 - 73*

[52] Ringeltaube to Anna, dated Udayagiri, 1 December 1810. William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 104

[53] Document I, Proclamation of the Governor General, *K.S.P.*, Vol. II, series 7, (November, 1931), pp. 63-64

[54] *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, vol, xxxiv, p. 8.

[55] William Robinson, *op.cit*, p. 109

who were groping in the darkness of a diseased religion. In 1811 alone over 400 persons were baptized by him.[56] Vigorous work was continued in 1812. In his eagerness to continue gospel work even after him, he was careful to train up local youths who had the calling and readiness for it. This was the humble beginning of the local ministry which he visualized as the most effective weapon of gospel work in new lands. [57]

It is often misconstrued by quite a few that the growth of Christianity was brought about by the lure of worldly gains more than by faith and conviction. [58] Christianity has never held out promises of earthly happiness; it has always sustained itself on the altar of sacrifice. This distinction was far from being clear to early people, both believers and dissenters. The former therefore showed readiness to get baptized because they supposed that British missionaries would ensure them mundane pleasures. The latter resisted or chose to suppress conversion because they feared that a leveling up of distinctions would lead to the loss of their feudal and caste superiority, which was the spear-head of all exploitation.[59]

Ringeltaube as a true Christian, was very selective in choosing from the mass of people who came forward to embrace Christianity. Before knowing the real motive of each individual he was not at all ready to baptize people for its own sake. He writes:

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[56] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 580

[57] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 12 September 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 82

[58] *L. C.*. p. 276; James Hough, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 282

[59] J. C. Hannyngton, Resident of Travancore and Cochin, to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Trivandrum, 24 November 1887. G. O. No. 925, 8 December 1887, Government of Madras, Political Department.

> There was a rush of 5000 Shanars upon me who had been long waiting for an opportunity to shake off the poll-tax and services attached to their caste and which they hoped to effect by connecting themselves with me[60]

But when they found that no temporal advantages were to be obtained, their zeal for the Protestant religion collapsed. A few of them remained in the re ligion and formed the basis of the churches established by Ringeltaube.[61]

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[60] W. T. Ringeltaube to Col. John Munro, dated Quilon, 30 March 1818. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9, pp. 1869 - 70. In the eighteenth century, nearly one half of the Roman Catholic Christians converted in the Nanguneri taluk in Tinnevelly and South Travancore were Nadars. "By its numbers and its wealth" wrote Father Calini in 1716, "the Shanan caste is in comparison with all other castes admirably adapted to Christianity. In fact, the Shanans could easily observe the Christian practices. The nature of their life, the necessity of climbing *palmyras*, preserves them from laziness, the fountain of all disorders. Besides, they are gifted with an excellent disposition, most inclined to religious matters" (H. R. Pate, *Madras District Gazetteers, Tinnevelly*, vol I, p. 90). Between 1800 and 1802, over 5000 Nadars were admitted to Christianity in Tinnevelly (*Ibid.*, p. 94). The Nadars of Travancore, who migrated to Tinnevelly in certain seasons of the year for employment, were influenced by this movement and waited for an opportunity to shake off the shackles which their caste had imposed on them.

[61] Ringeltaube to Col. John Munro, dated Quilon, 30 March 1813. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9, pp. 1869 - 71. Ringeltaube welcomed Christians who were half - converted in the hope that they would soon become wholly converted (William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 123). They were received into the Christian community only after, their discarding all Hindu habits and outwardly conforming to Christian usages, but they were not baptized. They and their children were placed under regular Christian instruction. Those of them who remained faithful to the religion were afterwards admitted to the rite of baptism. The rest remained as mere nominal or un-baptized Christians. M. A. Sherring, *op. cit*, p. 300

Once admitted to the fold, Ringeltaube knew that the people should be dedicated, if they were not to go astray. When he saw the feebleness of their faith he was very much grieved. His high hopes about the Mission often grew dim. He wrote to his sister Anna in January 1813:

> My poor ragged small congregations are still existing; but I don't observe much of the work of grace. I have now about 600 Chrstians, who are not worse than other Christians in India. About three or four of them may have a longing for their salvation. The rest have come from all kinds of motives, which we can only know after years have passed[62]

Yet by his dedicated efforts and continued supplication he made them turn devotedly to the divine will.[63]

Ringeltaube was not unconcerned about the welfare of the poor Christians. They had many temporal problems to solve before they could achieve spiritual progress. A very keen observer of men and things, he saw the distresses of the common people. "As to the distresses of the poor Shanars", Ringeltaube writes, "nothing came to my knowledge except that fowls and gram were pressed at too low a price"[64] Taxes were collected from the people quite inhumanly. Among those affected, the Nadars were the worst. Referring to their sufferings Ringeltaube writes:

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[62] Ringeltaube to Anna, January 1813. William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 111. The character of the people also made him uneasy. In a letter to his brother Ernst, he says, "You cannot have any confidential intercourse with many of the people. They are great rogues, the poorest of them consent to be made proselytes for money and good words, and afterwards they cleave to you like leeches. I have about 600 of them (adults), and therefore I am quite poor". Ringeltaube to Ernst, dated Travancore, 27 August 1814. *Ibid*, p. 116

[63] Ringeltaube's Journal, 30 January 1815. *Ibid.*, p. 119

[64] Letter dated Mailadi, 3 October 1812. C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 583

> They are thrown into the hands of usurers who take 100 percent (happy even at this condition if any one will or can lend them) and their profit, their livelihood is swallowed at one gulp. There is not a fowl that is taken, but human life in an indirect way.[65]

They suffered a lot under the cruel system of paying poll-tax. They had to pay poll-tax not only for the young and old, but also for the dead.[66] Several families migrated to Tinnevelly to avoid paying this heavy tax. The government then took the ruthless step of compelling the relatives who stayed back to pay the tax due from them.[67] The *oozhiyam* service rendered by the Nadars added to their grouse. Vedamanikkam, who actively worked among the Nadars, represented the matter to Ringeltaube and requested him to present it before the government. Ringeltaube interceded with Col. Munro, the Resident, on their behalf. As a result, a proclamation was issued on 29 June, 1814 exempting the Christians from paying the tax. In 1815 all the unjust taxes imposed on the poor classes were abolished and this brought immense relief to all the unprivileged.[68] The Christians were also exempted from performing *oozhiyam* services to the government on Sundays.[69]

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[65] *Ibid.*, p. 585

[66] The Resident to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 7 March 1818, For. Pol. Proc., Fort William, 17 July 1818, No. 20, pp. 61, 96

[67] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 573

[68] The Rani of Travancore to Col. John Munro, 26 Tye 992 M. E, (January, 1817) For. Pol. Proc., Fort William, 17 July 181 8, No. 20, p. 110.

[69] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 577

As early as 1812 Ringeltaube approached Col. Munro for a gift of paddy fields for the support of local teachers and for some charity to widows and orphans[70] just as the Raja of Tanjore had given to the Danish missionary, Schwartz, for the education of the children of the Christians in Tanjore. Accordingly, Col. Munro obtained for him from Rani Lakshmi Bai in 1814, Vayilakkulam and the northern part of Tamarakulam paddy gardens yielding about 350 star pagodas per annum.[71] Ringeltaube tells us about Munro's intention to procure the grant in the following words:

> If the Society could have thought of supplying their missionaries up to the exigencies of the situation he (Col. Munro) probably would never have thought of making the mission independent from European Supplies.[72]

The grant of land to the Mission insured its existence as much as it secured, "the salary for Native teachers and some charity for widows and orphans."[73] People began to flock to the churches when Ringeltaube acquired the lands.[74]

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[70] G. Parker, History of the Mission Fields, p. 4

[71] Ibid., Neettu No. I, Reg. No. 3923. The *neettu* granting land says: "These are given to the Rev. Mr. Ringeltaube the Protestant Missionary of the Kingdom of Travancore and to those who may come in his place to be enjoyed from the August crop season of 990 (1814)"

[72] Ringeltaube's Journal, 14 March 1814. Ibid., p. 5. Ringeltaube was in favour of acquiring land for the working of Missions in India. He wrote in his Journal, dated 14 March 1814: "These fields constitute a sort of Glebe lands forming consequently a permanent supply for those wants which are inseparable from a religious establishment and without which it is perfectly in vain to attempt introducing Christianity in any shape whatever into India. All Societies should aim at the acquisition of Glebe lands". Ibid

The reforms of Munro and the privileges granted by him to the Christians considerably helped the cause of Christianity in Travancore. When the Ezhavas, Nadars, and such other castes, who had embraced Christianity solicited permission for their women to cover their bosoms like Christian women in other countries, Col Munro granted it.[75] The Protestant Christians were exempted from doing compulsory duties connected with the temples, *murajapam* and also from *oozhiyam*.[76] These privileges granted to the Christians of the backward class converts, raised their status in society and induced many to join Christianity.

Ringeltaube bitterly opposed the caste system and tried his best to rid Christians of caste or class hatred. Every year on Christmas day, he invited all Christians to Mailadi and gave them a feast of love in the morning and evening, followed by Christian prayers and ceremonies. Non-Christians were not admitted to these feasts.[77] Such social gatherings played a vital role in removing caste prejudices and distinctions among the Christians, who were baptized from different castes.

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[73] Ringeltaube's Journal, 14 March 1814. Ibid., p. 4

[74] Ringeltaube to the Society, 22 October 1814. Ibid., p. 17

[75] Order tfrom Col. Munro to the Sarvadhikaryakkars of Trivandrum and Neyyattinkara, 19 Dhanu 988 M. E. (1813). C, M. Agur, *op. cit.*, App No. XVIII, p. 1

[76] Proclamation of the Rani, 16 Dhanu 991 M. E. *Ibid.*. App. No. XVIII, p. ii

[77] *Ibid.*, p, 608

Ringeltaube was also moved by the fate of Christians, who were denied even-handed justice by the judiciary. In those days there were no Protestant judges. Christian converts were not infrequently harassed by Hindu judges. Therefore in October 1815, when Col. Munro visited Cape Comorin, Ringeltaube met him and discussed with him the desirability of appointing a Protestant judge in South Travancore to help the poor Protestant Christians there. Accordingly, one John Everett was appointed as judge.[78] The caste Hindus viewed this departure from conventional practice with suspicion and misgivings. But the personality and power of Munro prevailed over all matters and the active support he received from the Rani silenced all opposition for the time being.

One would have anticipated the whole-hearted co-operation of L.M.S. for Ringeltaube's missionary efforts. But the fact was that he worked and lived a hand to mouth existence through the generosity of friends like Col. Macaulay, Col. Munro and Lt. Col. Trotter of Palayamkotta.[79] The missionary societies at that time followed a policy which was entirely different from that followed in later years. The missionaries were expected to support themselves in part or wholly by engaging themselves in trade or educational pursuits.[80] This policy doubtless caused much suffering to Ringeltaube for, he was forced to manage the affairs of the Mission on the pittance which the Directors allowed him. This neglect of the Society and his loneliness tended to depress him greatly.[81]

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[78] *Ibid.*, p. 631; Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, 30 March 1818. No. 9, pp. 1833 - 34

[79] William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 117

[80] I. H. Hacker, *op. cit.*, p. 25; William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 123

[81] *Ibid.*, p. 117

Towards the close of 1815, Ringeltaube's health deteriorated and he wrote to the Directors: "I am fast decaying, and am unfit for active service, there is none here who has authority to prescribe me change of air and employment".[82] He grew more and more anxious about the future of the Travancore Mission. He wanted to entrust the Mission to the hands of an able missionary or pastor and with that view in mind he contacted a few of his fellow missionaries in South India, but none of them were able to comply with his request.[83] When all attempts to get a European missionary failed, he decided to entrust his work to his senior catechist Vedamanikkam. Ringeltaube, without wasting time, made all arrangements with Vedamanikkam for the management of the Mission and particularly requested him not to neglect the cultivation of the fields. He requested Everett, who was appointed judge in South Travancore, and Col. Munro, to render all possible help to Vedamanikkam and to do justice to the Christians.[84]

The close of the labours of Ringeltaube in Mailadi was very touching, Ringeltaube accompanied by Vedamanikkam visited all the congregations and obtained a promise from the Resident. Col. Munro, that he would supply Vedamanikkam with funds to carry on his work.[85] In the end of January 1816 he assembled all the converts at the Mailadi church and informed them formally of the appointment of Vedamanikkam as his deputy till the arrival of another missionary. He also issued to him a certificate of ordination[86] and a licence to preach and administer

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[82] Ringeltaube to the Board of Directors, 9 April 1816. *Ibid.*, p. 123

[83] I. H, Hacker, *op. cit.*, p, 28; C. M, Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 610 - 11

[84] I. H. Hacker, *op. cit*,, p. 28; Mrs. Murry Mitchell, *op. cit.*. p. 190

[85] William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 121

[86] The certificate was issued to Vedamanikkam at Mailadi, dated 23 January, 1816

sacraments. Vedamanikkam was also empowered to administer the estates of the churches. After offering Holy Communion Ringeltaube blessed Vedamanikkam and gave him his own surplice.[87] The success of his mission gave Ringeltaube much satisfaction. He wrote to the Board of Directors of the L. M. S. on 9 April, 1816:

> My work is done and finished, so as to bear the stamp of permanency. Your money cannot be said to have been lost. You will find it in heaven and in the annals of the Church of Travancore.[88]

In a letter to his sister Anna also he expressed his satisfaction about his work in Travancore. He wrote: "I have brought a mission to a good standing by the help of our merciful Lord.... About 1, 100 have been baptized by me in Travancore".[89]

Ringeltaube left Travancore on 23 January, 1816 and went to Ceylon intending to proceed to the Cape of Good Hope from there. In a letter to his sister Anna from Colombo dated 24 April, 1816, he wrote:

> I am here on a voyage for the sake of my health. My liver has been affected severely, and my soul and body much weakened. I intend to go to Cape of Good Hope. Shall this voyage be my last?[90]

This letter was followed by another for Malacca, dated 27 September, addressed to the Treasurer of the L.M.S., requesting him to pay one hundred Spanish dollars to William

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[87] William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 122

[88] Ringeltaube to the Board of Directors, 9 April 1816. *Ibid.*, p. 123

[89] Ringeltaube to his sister Annna, dated Colombo, 24 April 1816. *Ibid.*, p. 124

[90] *Ibid*

Milne, one of the pioneer missionaries of the L.M.S. to China, who paid the amount to Ringeltaube to proceed to Batavia.[91] He also entertained the idea of going to the West Coast of Sumatra.[92] We have no information about him after that letter. James Hough says: "No one ever knew, whither he went, nor was he heard of again"[93] J. Ferd Fenger is of the opinion that he was killed on a journey into Central Africa before 1820.[94] According to Bishop Caldwell, he might have been murdered by the natives of the Malaya peninsula.[95] The most probable explanation is that Ringeltaube died of liver disease between Malacca and Batavia and was buried at sea.

Ringeltaube was a devoted missionary. Through self-abnegation and sacrifice, he attained the scintillating power of a spiritual leader. His austere habits found in him a real companion to those who needed guidance, help and leadership. He laboured assiduously for the conversion of Hindus and the moral edification of Christian converts. His charity and exemplary character made a deep impression on his folk. This shabby German missionary had something of the spirit of St. Francis X'avier, who laboured as a missionary in Travancore in the sixteenth century. His tough leadership was very much like that of Dr. Venderkemp of Africa, the first missionaries of Tahiti, and others. James Hough says: "He was made the means of diffusing some light in South Travancore; and the missionaries who followed him found several of his disciples walking in the path of life".[96]

After the departure of Ringeltaube, Vedamanikkam began to administer the affairs of the Mission. In his period of administration a new congregation was formed in July 1816, at Ammandivilai, consisting of about thirty converts.[99] The principle of a self-supporting church was initiated first by him. On that principle he refused to pay money from Mission funds for the upkeep of church buildings and premises. This came to stay and gradually they became aware of their responsibility toward the church and its affairs. Vedamanikkam was in charge of the Mission for about two years. He carried on the work of the Mission with diligence and the people remained devoted to the divine call.[98] He won fame and honour by efficiently maintaining the infant Mission without any aid from the Society in London. His charge of the Mission terminated with the arrival of Charles Mead in Travancore in Decmber 1817.[99]

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[91] Ringeltaube to Joseph Hardcastle, Treasurer of the L. M. S., dated Malacca, 27 September 1816. *Ibid.*, pp. 128 - 29

[92] *Ibid*

[93] James Hough, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 285

[94] J. Ferd Fenger, *op. cit.*, p. 245

[95] William Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 130

[96] James Hough, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, p. 285

[97] C,M. Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 628-30.

[98] Rev. Charles Webb Le Bas, *The Life of the Right Reverend Thomas Fanshaw Middleton. Late Lord Bishop of Calcutta*, vol. I, pp. 230 - 231

[99] *L. M. S. Report, 1819*, p. 53

CHAPTER III

ERA OF GREAT INGATHERINGS

1817 – 1865

The Directors of the L. M. S. decided to follow up the work initiated by the missionary William Tobias Ringeltaube and sent out missionaries to work in Travancore, the first being Charles Mead. He reached Travancore at the end of December 1817 and was gladly received by Vedamanikkam and his little flock at Mailadi. It was this missionary who nurtured the infant Mission left by Ringeltaube into an extensive organization and thus won the gratitude of posterity by becoming the master - builder of the Mission in South Travancore.[1]

Donning the mantle of his predecessor, he preached the gospel in the local dialect, Tamil, with added enthusiasm and courage of conviction. The district allotted to him by the Society consisted of several villages, most of which had churches and schools established by Ringeltaube. At each station a catechist read the Bible and preached to the congregation every Sunday. A new life seemed to prepare

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[1] *L. M. S. Report, 1819*, p. 53

the way for the rapid growth of the Mission. Writes Charles Mead to the Society on 4 April, 1818:

> The South Travancore Mission is assuming a pleasing aspect. Many are applying continually for instruction and baptism. The former Christians feel that their drooping courage is revived, while others, undecided before, have come to the determination of declaring on the side of truth.[2]

The British Resident in Travancore, Col. John Munro, knowing that the judiciary was undisputably the main-spring of social justice, arranged for the appointment of Charles Mead as the civil judge at Nagercoil.[3] The impact was instantaneous. Even handed justice meted out to the people brought much relief to them and this engendered a sense of security in the socially backward. Even caste Hindus approved of this positive step. The courts where Christian judges presided were in clear contrast with the others, affording security to person and property and creating confidence among the people. Mead endeavoured to secure for Christians the same privileges as those enjoyed by their Hindu neighbours.[4] The appointment of missionaries as judges, moreover, raised their prestige considerably and greatly helped the cause of Christianity. The Directors were, however, unwilling to permit him to continue in his judicial position, because in their view it would greatly hamper concentrated missionary efforts.[5] To conform to the directions of his superiors Mead relinquished his position as judge.

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[2] Letter of Charles Mead, dated Quilon, 4 April 1818. *E. M., M. C.*, vol. XXVI, (November, 1818), p. 489

[3] *Minutes'* p. 279; *L. M. S. Report, 1819*, p. 53

[4] Col. John Munro to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 30 March 1818. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9 pp. 1833 - 34

[5] *L. M. S. Report, 1819*, pp. 53 - 54

When Mead started his missionary work, he felt the necessity of removing the Mission centre from the little village of Mailadi to a central place. His appointment as judge of the district had necessitated his living at Nagercoil. With the consent of Munro, he transferred the headquarters of the Mission from Mailadi to Nagercoil. The Rani of Travancore, Parvati Bai (1815 – 1829), gave him the Residency Bungalow at Nagercoil.[6] Early in 1818, Mead moved to this Bungalow from the little hut built by Ringeltaube near the Mailadi church. The Raja of Cochin at this time contributed Rs. 5000 to the Protestant Mission in Travancore, and the amount was appropriated by Col. Munro in favour of the Mission of the L. M. S.[7] Charles Mead utilized nearly the whole of this amount in purchasing about 44 *kottas* of paddy fields at Pattamkulam and Vellamadam for the Mission and the balance of the money was spent for constructing a church at Nagercoil. In the same year the Rani of Travancore contributed Rs. 20,000 to the Church Missionary Society in North Travancore.[8]

In the work of the early missionaries we can trace a particular pattern. The missionaries or the local agents met the people on their visits and tried to convince them about the gospel and to win them to Christianity. On some other occasions, the missionaries as well as their agents

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[6] *Ibid.*, p. 54

[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 55 - 56

[8] Col. John Munro to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 30 March 1818. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9, p. 1830.

preached against Hindu religion at important centres and distributed pamphlets and handbills containing Christian religious principles.[9] However, baptisms were not given regardless of faith. But at the time of mass conversion, there was no place for personal conviction and faith. When a few people had accepted the gospel in a village, the next step was the construction of a chapel. After 1818, enormous sums had been sent to Travancore from the generous contributions of the people in England. When a chapel was built, its charge was given to a local agent, called 'catechist' or 'reader'.

Charles Mead welcomed all who were desirous of receiving Christian instruction at his hands, no matter what their motives were. But they were baptized only on proven faith and dedication.[10] In 1818 itself about 3000 people, mostly from the Nadar caste, embraced the religion.[11] We have seen how Ringeltaube refused to accept five thousand people of this caste when they came to him, as he plainly saw temporal motives in them. It is doubtful if in Mead's time their motives were more worthy. At any rate their accession is important, as this marks the beginning of the predominance of the Nadar community in the Mission, and the Nadar mass movement to Christianity in Travancore.

On 29 September, 1818 Charles Mead was joined by Richard Knill, another missionary of the L. M. S.[12] During his short stay he seems to have entered heartily into Mead's plan of work and to have greatly cheered and helped him.

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[9] This type of evangelism gave great offence to the Hindus, especially the Nairs. P. Shungoonny Menon, *History of Travancore*, pp.504-11

[10] *L. C.*, p. 268

[11] I. H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore*, p.34

[2] *L. M. S. Report, 1819*. p. 54

They formed a plan to visit each village which had a congregation. They stayed in the village for a week and did all that they could for the prospect of the church. Then they proceeded to the next village, stayed a week there, and moved on till they had completed their circuit.[13] When they designed this periodical tour there were ten congregations connected with the Travancore Mission.[14] And as far as possible catechists were employed to preach and teach in these congregations. The united efforts of Charles Mead and Richard Knill led to the increase in the congregations almost every day. In December 1818 itself fifty families were welcomed into the Nagercoil congregation. The Nadan at Agasteesvaram, a chieftain of the Nadars, embraced Christianity and this greatly helped the further spread of Christianity in that area. Several people from Agasteesvaram, Bhudappandy and Parakkay came forward to establish churches in these places.[15]

Apart from gospel work, Mead's name is also remembered for certain liturgical changes introduced by him. Ringeltaube, who was a German Lutheran, had taught

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[13] Rev. Richard Knill to Rev. James Small, dated Cape Comorin, South Travancore, 27 October 1813. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXVII, (May, 1819), p. 208

[14] They were at Nagercoil, Mailadi, Tamarakulam, Puttalam, Attikkadu, Kovilvilai, Ittamozhi, Anandanadankudiyiruppu, Pichaikudiyiruppu and Udayagiri, Letter of Charles Mead, dated Nagercoil, 26 October 1818, *Ibid.*, vol. XXVII, (July, 1819), pp. 303-4; *L. M. S. Report*, 1819, pp. 121-22

[15] Charles Mead to John Munro, 14 December 1818. *Ibid.*, 1819, p. 125

Lutheran *Catechisms* and forms of worship.[16] The Tamil prayer books and *Catechisms* of the Lutheran Church of Tanjore were inconsequence used by the Mailadi Christians and their brethren in the Mission. When Mead took charge of the Mission he gradually introduced the Methodist ways and forms of worship which he thought would be of greater appeal to the converts; and therefore he translated Dr. Watt's *First Catechisms* into Tamil and the early converts and catechists were taught the same.[17]

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[16] Lutheran *Catechisms*, written by Martin Luther in 1529, are handbooks of elementary religious instruction rather than theological documents. It became the basis of religious instruction in the Lutheran churches all over the world. The ethos of Lutheran worship differs from Methodist, being much more traditional and liturgical. It was conservative of the old forms rather than of their informing spirit, save the Holy Communion, where his doctrine of consubstantiation shows much the same mode of conceiving the Real Presence as the traditional Catholic one

[17] C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, pp. 701 - 2. Methodism is a term used to describe a section of the Christian church which emphasizes the doctrines of assurance, conversion and holiness of Christian perfection, and lays special stress on personal experience and fellowship in Christian service. The movement began with the evangelistic work of John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield in the eighteenth century. Methodism stands for Christian brotherhood. In its view the proof of church membership lies essentially not in observance of sacraments, nor in obedience to priests, but in fulfilling the part of Christ's brethren, of His Law of Love, by their seeking one another's company and bearing one another's burdens. They abandoned the older fundamentalism. The doctrinal standards were contained in Wesley's *Notes on the New Testament* and in his *Sermons*. The Methodist form of worship is very simple and hymns and hymn - singing have an important place in it. Charles Mead minimised the prominent part which rituals and ceremonies

The spread of the gospel and the establishment of churches in several places necessitated the construction of a spacious church at Nagercoil to be used as meeting centre for all Christians of the Mission and as headquarters. The foundation stone for this great Nagercoil Church was laid by Richard Knill on the New Year's Day of 1819.[18] To help prosecute this work, contributions were raised even from the Hindu Rajas. The Maharaja of Tanjore from whose dominions Protestantism first spread into Travancore, donated Rs. 500 and theRani of Travancore gave the land, timber and other materials needed for construction.[19] It took about forty years to complete the buildings.

Churches were established at important centres in 1819. Special mention may be made of those at Tittuvilai and Agasteesvaram. Proselytization went hand in hand with the

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occupied in the churches established by Ringeltaube and introduced the simple Methodist ways and forms of worship, though the form of church government drifted towards Congregationalism. Worship in the churches of the L. M. S. in Travancore generally consisted of the following order of service, with slight variations according to different occasions. (1) Prayer (2) Hymn (3) Lyric (4) The Lord's Prayer (5) Extempore Prayers (6) Reading of portions from the Old Testament (7) Prayers (8) Reading of portions from the New Testament (9) Sermon (10) Collection (11) Benediction

18 Letter of R. Knill, 4 January 1819. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXVII. (August, 1819), p. 341

19 C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 704. The Nagercoil Church measures 140 ft by 70 ft. Its side - walls are 19 ft. high and the inner walls are about double its height. The latter contains seven arches standing on 14 pairs of massive pillars on each side supporting an elaborately furnished teak roof and net work of beams. There are two spacious vestries and a large imposing portico.

sprouting-up of churches. The Directors of the L. M. S. evinced great interest in the Travancore Mission and decided to strengthen it by sending out more missionaries The new team which came in May 1819 comprised of John Smith and Charles Mault.[20] But in proportion to the magnitude of work at hand this was only a meagre addition as Mead himself had confessed.[21] However, he did not despair, but continued to apply himself dedicatedly to the cause of strengthening the Mission. He was not averse to taking donations for the purpose from friends of the Mission abroad. The plan of Mead was to erect 'bungalow chapels' in the places where congregations were formed. Such chapels were modest buildings coting an average of £25 or a little more. As an encouragement to donors such chapels were named after them.[22]

The missionaries having thus prepared the stage pressed forward confidently. Work among the youth was an important feature of the new missionary work. In a letter to the Society dated 28 June 1820, the missionaries wrote: "Much of our hope, in regard to success in our work, is in the rising generation, whose prejudices time has not ripened into habits, and whose minds are susceptible of early impressions."[23] Students who came out of the educational

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20 *L. M. S. Report, 1821*, p. 62

21 Letter from Charles Mead and Charles Mault, dated Nagercoil, 31 January 1820. *E. M. M. C.*, vol, XXVIII, (August. 1820), p. 355

22 C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*. p. 734. The hall or main building of the bungalow chapels was used as a place of worship on Sundays, and in some stations as a school on other days. Attached to the body of the main building at one end were a vestry and a spare room or two for the missionary to stay whenever he went on preaching tours or inspection duty.

23 Letter from Charles Mault and John Smith, dated Nagercoil, 28 June 1820. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXIX, (February 1881), p. 86

institutions established by the missionaries, especially from the Seminary at Nagercoil, were appointed readers in their Mission stations. Charles Mead appointed numerous "Public Readers of the Scriptures", whose duty it was "to itinerate throughout the country and everywhere dispense the word of life."[24] The readers so appointed generally resided in places where the Christians were predominant. This local agency formed the main prop of the missionary endeavour. The missionaries with the passage of time worked more as directors and superintendents of congregations than as evangelists among the Hindus.

The Mission progressed tremendously in the year 1820. As the missionary work was done in the local language, there was very great response from the people. Schools sprang up at all Mission centres and this gave added incentive to the people to associate themselves intimately with the Christian work The missionaries at Nagercoil desired to establish a chain of schools imparting religious and secular instruction, all along the way from Aruvamozhi, the entrance of Travancore, to Quilon, the headquarters of the troops and principal abode of the British Resident. Similarly, with a view to extending the confines of the Mission work they hit upon the plan of starting a branch of the Mission at Quilon under John Smith, who sought the permission of the Resident for the same.[25] The Resident immediately granted him permission to reside at Quilon and establish a Mission station there. He also liberally subscribed Rs. 200 for the construction of school rooms.[26]

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[24] *Ibid*, vol. IV, (New Series, March 1921), p. 129. 'Readers' were called as 'catechists' in the time of Ringeltaube.

[25] *Ibid.*, vol. XXX, (January, 1822), p. 36. Quilon at that period contained about 80,000 inhabitants. Letter from John Smith, dated Quilon, 10 April 1821. *Ibid,*. vol. XXIX, (October, 1821), p. 440

[26] *L. M. S. Report, 1822* p. 93. Letter from John Smith, dated Quilon, 10 April, 1821. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXIX, (October. 1821), p. 140,

The importance of Quilon as a Mission station induced the Directors of the L. M. S. to send out to John Smith an additional missionary, William Crowe, in 1822 for assisting him.[27] But both left for England for reasons of ill-health. J. C. Thompson arrived at Quilon in 1827. His period marked the beginning of a revival in this station.[28]

The missionaries had long expressed their desire to start a Mission station at Trivandrum, the capital of Travancore. Apart from its importance as capital, as a junction between Cape Comorin and Quilon it had added significance. As a prelude to opening this centre they started a school in the vicinity of Trivandrum in 1822.[29] In the same year a small congregation was formed at Tengapattanam, a town six miles west of Kolachal. The missionaries record the event: "This brings us nearly half way to Trivandrum, where schools may be established with great advantage".[30] Between 1822 and 1825 several small congregations were formed in the neighbourhood of Trivandrum.[31] Although schools and congregations were formed in the neighbourhood, the Society's missionaries were not permitted to establish themselves in Trivandrum.[32]

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[27] *L.M. S. Report, 1823*, p. 78

[28] *Ibid., 1835*, p. 70

[29] *Ibid,, 1822*, p. 94

[30] Letter from Messrs. C. Mead, C. Mault and J. Smith, dated Negercoil, 14 February 1822. *E. M. M. C.*. Vol. XXX, (December. 1822), p. 411

[31] They were at Valiyaturai, Kannanturai. Neyyattinkara, Vilavankodu, Karumkulam, Kuzhitturai and Kuzhivilai .*L. M. S. Report, 1825*. pp. 104-5

[32] The first deputation of the L. M. S. under Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett had recommended William Miller, who arrived in Nagercoil on 31 October, 1827, to take up his residence and commence a new station at Trivandrum. (Letter from Rev. Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett, dated Mauritius, 7 December, 1828), p. 545). But on account

To assess the work of its Missions in different parts of the world and to recommend methods suited for further orientation and development, the L. M. S. sent a deputation consisting of Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett. In 1827 they visited the Travancore Mission. They were very much impressed with the general prosperity of the Mission and sent to England an enthusiastic report: "There is nothing, so far as we have seen, equal to it in all India"[33] The deputation proposed some modifications in the working of the Nagercoil Mission. Although an agreement was made between Charles Mead and Charles Mault to divide it into eastern and western divisions in 1821,[34] the latter had to work under great disadvantages due to the Mission field being so remote from the residence of the missionaries at Nagercoil. Therefore the deputation proposed to effect a separation of the two divisions into two distinct Mission districts each under the charge of a European missionary.[35] According to the plan so adopted Charles Mault was to remain in charge of the eastern division at Nagercoil, with its Seminary, congregations, schools and local teachers and Mead was to take up his residence at Neyyur, a central spot in the western division, with its printing establishment, congregations, schools and local teachers. Neyyur became the headquarters of the western division.

Another recommendation of the deputation was the formation of the Travancore District Committee. Hitherto

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of the demise of his wife and the Travancore Government's denial of permission to him to work in Trivandrum, this did not materialise. Following this, W, B. Adis, another missionary, was put in charge of organising the new Mission district. Two readers were also allotted to help him, But Addis also did not receive the necessary permission to reside in Trivandrum and start a Mission station there. The two readers were usefully employed, one at Valiyaturai, near the town of Trivandrum, and the other visited the villages in its vicinity. (Letter from W. B. Addis, dated Nagercoil. 1 April *1830*. *Ibid.*, vol. VIII (New Series, October, *1830*), p, 452). After the departure of W. B Addis from Travancore in 1829, the work in Trivandrum was carried on as part of the Neyyur Mission district by Charles Mead. In December 1834, when the Raja Svati Tirunal (1829 - 1846) visited the Nagercoil Mission district, he was impressed with the progress of the Mission. This paved the way for the establishment of a missionary centre at Trivandrum.

33 Letter from Rev. Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett, dated Mauritius, 7 December 1827. *Ibid.*, vol. VI, (New Series, December *1828*), p, 543

34 *L. M. S. Report, 1823*, p. 77. The congregations east of Nagercoil, Mailadi, Tamarakulam, Mukilankudiyiruppu, Agasteesvaram, Palpanabhan Mission Field, Puttalam, Kottar, Parakkay, Putiyagramam, Kovilvilai, Attikkadu, and Pichaikudiyiruppu, and the evangelistic work up to Cape Comorin were supervised by Charles Mault. The congregations west of Nagercoil, Kottanvilai, Deviyodu, Pattanam, Mathiyodu, Peyankudi, Ittavilai, Iraniyal, Ittamozhi, Anandanadan Kudiyiruppu, Tittuvilai, and Kalliyankadu, and the evangelistic work extending upto Trivandrum, devolved upon Charles Mead. The readers in the eastern division were James Clark, Glasskay, W. Haweis Cooper, Rowland Hill, S. S Greatheed, George Clark, John Palmer, William Eccles and C. Noel Welman. The readers of the western division were John Old field, John Clapham, William Bushe, Benjamin, W. H. Mathias, Charles Seymour, Richard Knill, William Urwick, and Henry Martyn. The system of giving English names to the readers was first introduced by Charles Mead. Readers were given the names respectively of the several annual subscribers of £10 each. *Ibid.*, pp. 72-77

35 Letter from Rev. Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett, dated Mauritius, 7 December 1827. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. VI, (New Series, December, 1828), pp. 546 - 47. At the time of the visit of the deputation the eastern division contained 14 chapels, 1,410 Christians. 36 schools with 1,304 boys and 106 girls, and the western division, 12 chapels, 1,441 Christians. 21 schools with 541 children. In the Quilon Mission there were 9 boys' schools of the strength of 450 children and one for girls in which there were 27 pupils.

Travancore formed part of the Madras District Committee, and Charles Mead and Charles Mault together, or in turn attended the Committee.[36] On the formation of the T. D. C. in 1828, the Mission stations of the Society ceased to be a part of the Madras District Committee. The T.D C. transacted independently the business of its stations. All European missionaries sent out to Travancore by the Directors of the L. M. S. were made members of the T.D.C. It was authorized to suspend any missionary on doctrinal and moral grounds. At its inception, the T. D C. included the missionary stations of Nagercoil, Nevyur, Quilon, and the proposed station of Trivandrum. The Committee strictly prohibited the missionaries from engaging in anything other than missionary work.[37]

With the notable progress of the gospel through the increase of agencies and the formation of new congregations and Mission stations, opposition gradually raised its dragon head. In several places it turned into open persecution.[38] The converts to Christianity were mainly drawn from the inferior classes and slaves. Their education and enlightenment by the Christian missionaries made it difficult for their masters to hold them in servitude any longer. Caste Hindu dominance no longer appeared to be tenable. As the Nadar and other converts advanced in education and enterprise, and improved their material circumstances, they resisted the injustice and humiliation inflicted on them by

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[36] *Ibid*, vol. XI, (New Series, March, 1823), p 133

[37] *District Committees in India*, (Nagercoil, February 5, 1828, Printed at the Mission Press), pp. 1 - 6

[38] Col. Morrison to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 23 November 1829. For. Pol. Cons., 23 July 1830. No. 18, pp. 15 - 22; P. Shungoonny Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 505 – 6

caste Hindus. The privileged classes could not tolerate the advancement of the lower classes and refused to recognize the equality which the latter claimed as a logical sequel to their enlightenment. Missionaries took it as part of a calculated move to put a stop to further evangelization.[39]

It took the form of threats in the beginning and afterwards led to overt acts of personal assault, annoyance and public outrage. Several chapels and schools were burnt down by the caste Hindus.[40] Christian women were insulted and beaten in the bazaars. The government also was none the less alert. A proclamation was issued on 3 February, 1828, restricting the freedom of movement of the Mission. It prohibited new or recent converts from interfering with the privileges of the caste Hindus as prescribed by ancient custom and usage. The injunction that converts should not infringe the ancient usage meant that they should not on the ground of their conversion pollute the caste Hindus. If low caste converts departed in any respect from the above regulation, they were deemed to have infringed the custom and usage of the country, and offended the feelings of the Hindus. The proclamation of 1829 prevented the missionaries from erecting places of worship without formal permission from the government.[42] The proclamation was thus a clear move to delimit the freedom of movement and growth of the Christians.

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[39] Letter from William Miller, dated Quilon. 13 April 1830. *E. M. M. C.* vol. VIII, (New Series, November, 1830), p. 496; Letter of Charles Mead and Charles Mault, dated Nagercoil, 31 January 1820, *Ibid.*, vol. XXVIII, (August, 18 0), p. 355

[40] Col. Morrison to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, 23 November, 1829- For. Pol. Cons., 23 July, 1830, No. 18, pp 15 – 22

[41] Christian converts - Their Treatment in Travancore, Cover File No. 215 p. 22

[42] Proclamation of the Rani of Travancore, 23 Makaram 1004 M. E, (3rd February, 1829). Neettu vol. 20, pp. 48 – 50. Vide App. I

In the mountainous parts of the Neyyur Mission district, the missionaries experienced bitter opposition from the higher castes, who viewed the advent of the missionaries as a dark omen of destruction of their long established customs. The chapel at Cheruvarakkonam was burnt down by the Hindus and the poor people who embraced Christianity there were molested in various ways.[43] Raman Tampi, an enlightened Hindu, who helped Mead to acquire land at Neyyur for the Mission, was arrested and imprisoned for his action. The missionaries came forward and advocated the cause of Raman Tampi and he was released.[44] This is said to have made a favourable effect in the minds of the caste Hindus. This was followed by a cordial reception of the gospel by the higher and wealthier classes, who had opposed tooth and nail the extension of the Mission and stood aloof. It is reported that they invited the missionaries to their houses and offered them ground for the creation of Mission schools, expressing at the same time their desire to send their children to schools and for Christian instruction. The Mission statistics show that at the end of 1836 in the Neyyur Mission district alone there were 1403 families consisting of 4,890 Christians in the congregations.[45]

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[43] *L. M. S. Report, 1836*, p. 71

[44] *Ibid*, p. 72; *1837*. p. 82

[45] *Ibid.* The missionary work of Mead in the Neyyur district bore rich fruits in spite of persecution. The persecution seems to have purified the churches. The most remarkable event connected with the missionary work there in the 1830's was the conversion of the principal man of a village called Kallimatturai, who was the Nadan, and several Hindu families to Christianity (Letter from Charles Mead, dated Neyyur, 22 August 1831. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. X, (New Series, July, 1832),

Nagercoil witnessed considerable momentum. In 1832 the number of congregations in the Nagercoil district reached thirty. Reports prove that evangelical fervour reached its watermark in this period[46] In 1835 there were more than 40 congregations in the Nagercoil Mission district. Besides the Hindus several Roman Catholics also joined the Mission.[47] Bible classes were regularly arranged. At Nagercoil and Agasteesvaram, classes were held for young women who enjoyed the advantages of a basie education in schools. Even critics of the Mission admit that the readers efficiently worked for the spread of the gospel among the Hindus.[48] This all round progress of the Mission work made Mault very happy. He writes:

> Not withstanding many disappointments, I had never more encouragements in my work, and never felt a greater delight in prosecuting it. Our chapels are well attended, our communicants increasing, and the people in many instances are attentive to instruction and increasing in knowledge. The schools are well attended, and are daily becoming more important as centres from which the Gospel will be widely diffused.[49]

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p. 328). In 1832 in the Neyyur Mission district there were 43 congregations, composed of more than 600 families from 50 different villages. The missionaries claim that from Neyyur district over 3,000 individuals renounced idolatry and joined the Mission in 1832 (*L. M. S. Report, 1832*, pp. 71 - 73). Women of the district excelled men in zeal and diligence. Those who were converted were excommunicated from their, respective castes to which they belonged and this only inspired them to remain steadfast to the new religion. Letter from Charles Mead, dated Neyyur, 10 September 1834. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XIII (New Series, July, 1835), p. 298

[46] *L. M. S Report, 1832*, p. 69

[47] *Ibid, 1835*, pp. 65 - 66

[48] P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit,*. p. 505

[49] Letter from Charles Mault, dated Nagercoil, 12 March 1835. C. M. Agur *op. cit,*. pp. 860 - 61

The L.M.S. Report for 1837 tones: "The general state of the congregation is highly encouraging; not less than 6,000 persons are under the sound of the Gospel."[50]

With the arrival of five new missionaries in 1838, a new era of missionary work commenced in Travancore. This was the aftermath of Charles Mead's intercession in England for the cause of the Travancore Mission. The new missionaries were, John Abbs, John Cox, James Russel, James J. Pattison and Dr. A. Ramsay.[51] With the arrival of the new batch of missionaries the field of operation of the Nagercoil Mission district was divided into three districts and these were placed under the care of C. Mault, C. Miller and James Russel.[52] In 1839 a young Brahmin was converted and he openly declared his new faith. It has been stated by the missionaries that the Brahmins of Nagercoil tried their best to force him to renounce Christianity. But he stood his ground and was appointed a teacher in the Mission.[53] This gave the Missionaries an incentive to work among the privileged classes with renewed hope. As a result of his labours Charles Mault succeeded in winning a few familes from the privileged classes and placing them under Christian intruction. This movement commenced at

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[50] *L. M. S. Report, 1837*, p. 80

[51] Directors of the L. M. S. to J C. Thompson, Secretary, T. D. C. dated London, 20 October 1837, T. D. C Correspondence, Letters, 1837

[52] *L. M. S. Report, 1840*, p. 64. The eastern part of the Nagercoil Mission district was placed under the charge of James Russel while the western half remained under Charles Mault. The charge of the Seminary and the southern part of Nagercoil devolved upon Charles Miller in 1841, J. O. Whitehouse took over the charge of the Seminary.

[53] *E M. M. C.*, vol. XVII. (New Series, November, 1839), p. 576

Kottaram, a Hindu village near Agasteesvaram. About twelve families regularly attended Christian instruction and firmly withstood the torment of their Hindu kinsmen. And the missionaries observed that their faith was so strong that intimidation by opponents proved to be of no avail.[54]

When Ebenezer Lewis joined the Nagercoil Mission from Madras in 1846 a fresh division was made in the existing Mission districts. The congregations and schools in the western district, including some of those in the southern were assigned to him and the new district came to be called Santhapuram, or the City of Peace. Within a few years this centre made great progress. In W.H. Dalton's words:

> Its pretty parsonage, its neat church, already too small for the demands of the Christian population, its flourishing girls' school, containing more than a hundred girls, its lace establishment, its alms houses for poor widows, its well-planned village, and huge well, all reflect much credit on the perseverance and energy of Mr. Lewis, the Missionary by whom it was founded.[55]

James Russel assumed charge of some of the congregations in the east of Nagercoil adjoining his station and named the new district as James Town. The central and northern parts were put under the superintendence of Charles Mault. J. O. Whitehouse, who was in charge of the Seminary at Nagercoil, visited some of the congregations in this division on Sundays.[56] When the second deputation of the L. M. S. under W. H. Drew visited Nagercoil in 1846, he was astonished at the progress made by the Mission.[57] He was very much impressed by the growth of the lower orders and the advantages gained by them. "Already other castes", referring to the advancement made by the Nadars, W. H. Drew writes, "are beginning to be jealous of the advantages the Shanars are gaining from their connection with us...If they continue to grow in mind, intelligence, and character, they must gain influence, and that influence must be felt, and felt for good".[58]

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[54] Letter from Mrs. Mault, June 1845. *Ibid*,, vol. XXIII, (New Series October, 1845), p. 551

[55] W. H. Dalton, *Missions in India*, pp, 106 - 7

[56] *L. M. S. Report, 1847*, p. 87

The ceaseless efforts of Ebenezer Lewis at Santhapuram fructified commendably. The people there joined with him to change the existing social set up. Caste barriers were broken; the lowest and the highest walked together like brothers. As a result, several additions were made from the Hindu and Roman Catholic population. Intermarriages between the lower and higher caste Christian converts were also conducted and encouraged by the missionaries.[59]

Most of the converts lived up to the standards of Christianity and this gave the missionaries much satisfaction. In all the principal congregations there were intelligent, pious and devoted people of both sexes, who were regular in attending church meetings and helping the missionary activities. They were also anxious to convert their relatives and neighbours to their new faith. "The number of such" says Charles Mault, "is gradually increasing in several places and forms a band sufficient to encourage

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[57] Letter from Rev. W. H. Drew, dated Nagercoil, 6 April 1846. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXIV, (New Series, July, 1846), p. 379

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 380

[59] *L. M. S. Report, 1851*, p. 74. The first inter-caste marriage in the Nagercoil district was between a Nadar boy and a Paraya girl, both Christian converts. Ebenezer Lewis built for them a new cottage at his own expense to make public his approbation.

and assist each other in facing the opposition and reproach they have to encounter from the world. They are indeed lights in the midst of surrounding darkness"[60] The attention of J. O Whitehouse was directed mainly to the educational department of the Mission. He left an enduring monument behind him in a well-organized educational establishment at Nagercoil.

If the progress of the Mission is to be gauged by the measure of opposition it aroused, then the 1850's was the most impressive of all. It was in this decade that the most determined persecution arose against the Christians, ostensibly on account of the wearing by women of the upper-clothes which were designed to mark off the higher castes.[61] With this was mixed up the demands for forced labour and Sunday work, both of which were resolutely opposed by Christians. By the end of 1858 and the beginning of 1859, the persecution reached its height, and in Nagercoil, Neyyur, Parassala and Trivandrum districts, many chapels and schools were burnt down, catechists and Christians were flogged, and their houses, pillaged.[62] But, as usual, it only helped to strengthen the Mission. It established the Christians in their faith and made them loyal to the Mission and the missionaries, who gave them guidance and support. The Hindu Nadars, who made common cause with the agitation to secure for their women the right to wear upper-clothes, rightly perceived that it was time for them to back-up the missionaries. Vacillating between two opinions till then, they now joind the Christians.[63] Says Frederick Baylis:

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[60] *Ibid*, 1852, p. 98

[61] For a detailed discussion of the issue see Chapter VIII

[62] T. Madhava Row to General Cullen, dated Trivandrum, 12 February 1859. *Official Papers*, pp. 7 - 9

[63] *M. M. C.*, vol. XXIII, (November, 1859), p, 265; vol, XXIV, (June, 1860), p. 170

> From the commencement of this year (1859) there has been a considerable movement going on among the heathen (chiefly the Shanaars) in the district, and upto this time atleast 700, including nearly 500 adults, have been added to the Mission. The people seem generally to have felt that the disturbances were checked, and far worse evils prevented from coming upon them, through the efforts made by the Missionaries. They were convinced that we were their best friends.[64]

The lower classes in general recognized that the missionaries were trying to teach a religion calculated to raise them from the morass of degradation and ignorance. "This movement among the heathens in favour of Christianity", writes Baylis, "has continued to go on. Since the commencement of this year (1860), I find that, 545(333 adults and 212 children) members have been formed, and six devil-places destroyed .... I hear of many more who are almost persuaded to become Christians - in name at least".[65]

Just as these troubles came to an end came James Duthie to Nagercoil, a name closely associated with the Travancore Mission till his death in 1908. He took over the work of the Nagercoil Seminary and under his fostering care it became one of the first rate educational institutions of South India. Frequently arranged social meetings added to the already pervading spirit of cohesion among the Christians. It also helped much for the removal of caste prejudices of Christians.[66] As a result of the strenuous efforts

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[64] *Ibid.*, vol. XXIII, (November, 1859), p. 265

[65] Letter from Frederick Baylis to Dr. Tidman, dated Neyyur, 2 July 1860. *Ibid.*, vol. XXIV, (October, 1860), p. 280

[66] *L. M. S. Report, 1864*, p. 94. In 1866 Nagercoil Mission contained more than 10,500 Christians. *Ibid*, *1867*, p. 150

of missionaries, Nagercoil became one of the important cultural centres of South India.

After 1838 the attention of Mead was mainly directed to the slaves of his Mission district, Neyyur. Several families of slaves were redeemed from slavery and brought under Christianity.[67] The most remarkable event in the history of the Neyyur Mission district during the 1840's according to the missionaries was the renunciation of their religion by about 160 Hindus of the weaver caste. The chief of the weavers also followed suit.[68] Mead worked assiduously for making additions to the Church from the lowest sections of society. Although much progress was made in all departments of the Mission, one can find that the extension of the faith was not very fast in Travancore. In one of his last reports to the L. M. S., Mead writes:

> It is certain that Christianity is not likely to prevail extensively in the present state of things. Idolatry, and the customs of caste are upheld by authority, and the very poorest have not had the protection that is necessary, if they are to enjoy the benefits of instruction. Our whole course has been a series of conflicts, to prevent the entire destruction of our native congregations and their new movement among the slaves will bring

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[67] *Ibid.*, *1850*, p. 72

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 71. Charles Mead writes of the origin and details of the caste: "The ancestors of the weavers immigrated from Tinnevelly, about 500 years since. At that time the south of Travancore was in some parts thinly peopled, and they had to cut away the jungle, to clear the spot in which their houses are erected. This they did by the assistance of the Nadanmars who appear to have introduced about ten families, to be employed as barbers. The people have greatly increased, and now the greater part subsist by weaving cloths from cotton thread. This occupation has raised a few of them to wealth; the others remain poor, and are hired as daily labourers". *M,M.C.*, vol. XIV, (1859), p. 221

> us into conflict with their owners both public and private.[69]

After a period of glorious work in the midst of the tremendous odds Charles Mead retired in 1853. He guided the destiny of the Travancore Mission at a most critical period in its history. His untiring zeal was behind the formation of all the Mission districts and important churches in Travancore. "Mr. Mead", says John Abbs, "was the founder both of Nagercoil and Neyoor, in fact the Father of the South Travancore Mission and the principal agent in the formation of (nearly) all the stations..."[70] He was succeeded by C. C. Leitch, who joined the Mission in 1853. His chief interest lay in the reformation of the Mission. Reorganization of the local church was his primary endeavour and in this he produced salutary results.

As early as 1839, a Medical Mission was started by Dr. Archibald Ramsay. A small hospital was established and great numbers of people crowded to him for treatment and advice. But following Dr. Ramsay's exit in 1842 the medical work went into hibernation. It was revived with the arrival of C. C. Leitch in 1853 and he used it as an effective auxiliary to missionary efforts. Patients of both lower and higher classes were benefited by it. C. C. Leitch writes:

> At first I feared that the higher class would be deterred from attending by the fear of contracting pollution, or from dislike to the religious service which all patients are required to attend. These fears happily proved unfounded for not only did the daily attendance occasionally exceed 100, and rarely fall below 50, but Brahmins, Soodras, and Mohammedans were frequently

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[69] *L. M. S. Report, 1851* p. 76

[70] Quoted by C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, p. 647

> to be found sitting close by the poorest and most degraded of the population.[71]

Considering the importance of the medical work the Society appointed Frederick Baylis to cooperate with Leitch, and he joined the Mission in July 1854. But before long, Leitch died and the duties of the whole Neyyur Mission district, including the charge of the dispensary, fell on the shoulders of Baylis.[72] The first few years of his work did not give him much satisfaction; yet he continuously preached to the non-Christians. The policies of the Travancore Government also made him uneasy. He writes of the government.

> We have too a heathen government, which, though professionally tolerant, is really entirely against us, and uses all its influence, especially while its present hands, to thwart our designs.[73]

The charge of the dispensary devolved upon John Lowe in 1861, when he came to Neyyur as a missionary. He worked for eight years and set the Medical Mission work on strong foundations. In October 1864 the dispensary became "The South Travancore Mission Hospital". Additional buildings were erected by public contributions. Three branch dispensaries were also opened at other missionary stations. A training class consisting of eight intelligent, well-educated, young men for the study of medicine and surgery, and a class to train nurses and midwives were also started by Lowe.[74] The results of the Medical Mission were far-reaching. It gradually became the link between the non-Christians and the Travancore Mission. It also gave a rude shock to the prevailing caste prejudices and produced in the minds of the caste Hindus a lasting impression about the service-mindedness of the missionaries which in turn helped the cause of Christianity.

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[71] *L, M S. Report. 1854*, p. 89

[72] *Ibid.*, 1855, p. 79

[73] *Ibid.*, 1857, p. 81

[74] *Ibid.*, 1865, p. 90

John Abbs took up his residence at Neyyur in 1838 and the western portion of the district was put under his charge. This latter developed into the Parassala Mission district in 1845. As the missionary of the Parassala Mission district he initiated various innovations for promoting the spirit of harmony and goodwill. Periodic meetings of the Christians of the district was one such means for promoting self-help and permeating Christian ideals.[75] In 1850 the missionary work was extended by Abbs to the remote parts of the Parassala Mission district, namely, the hill areas.[76] He started two schools there to diffuse the knowledge of the religion among them. The people received the missionary courteously and showed their interest in the religion. But several difficulties prevented the missionary from launching active missionary work. The area was covered with jungles interspersed by arge streams and inhabited by wild beasts. Therefore a special mission of readers was formed to work in this area.[77] In

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[75] *M.M.C.*, vol. XIX, (September, 185), p. 154. The gospel was first preached in Parassala by Charles Mead and in 1838 it was placed under the care of John Abbs. The number of professing Christians at that time were only 2412. The growth of the Parassala area prompted John Abbs to start a Mission station and settle there in 1845.

[76] *L. M. S. Report, 1851*, p. 76

[77] *Ibid.* For further details about Parassala district, see John Abbs, *Twenty-two Years 'Missionary Experience in Travancore.*

the same year two theological classes were started by him for the benefit of readers and also other young men desirous of receiving Christian instruction. Although there was a rush of converts, Abbs was not indiscriminate in admitting them. It was only after proven sincerity and real fellowship that newcomers were admitted.[78] He retired from the Mission in 1859 while witnessing the great success of Parassala district. He was succeeded by the missionary Samuel Mateer who was afterwards joined by G. O. Newport. When Mateer took charge of the Trivandrum and Quilon Mission districts in 1861, Parassala came under G. O. Newport.

The years from 1861 to 1866 witnessed a tremendous rise in the number of converts to Christianity. Frederick Baylis at Neyyur, Samuel Mateer at Parassala, and after him G. O. Newport, received thousands to the Christian fold. In 1861-62 in the Neyyur and Parassala districts some 4000 Nadars embraced Christianity.[79] In 1862 there commenced a new movement among the Parayas and the Pulayas of the Parassala Mission district. Mateer writes in his report to the Society:

> Two small congregations of Pariahs, formerly slaves, and the first of this class who have joined us in this District have been lately formed. The beginning is indeed small, but it is a beginning, and there seems a general feeling of willingness on the part of many of this long degraded people to receive glad doctrines of salvation.[80]

Mateer found a remarkable spirit of earnestness, diligence and attention among them. This movement continued unabated for years. The new converts were formed into congregations. Though generally of the lowest class, they made rapid progress in learning the principles of Christianity and lived up to the standards of Christian ethics.

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[78] *L. M. S. Report 1853*, p. 98

[79] *L. C.*, p. 309

[80] *L. M. S. Report, 1853*, p. 109

The addition to the Church from these untouchable classes is very remarkable. Up to this time the L. M. S's converts in Travancore had been drawn principally from the Nadar caste. Ringeltaube's first converts had been Parayas. But those who were attracted to Christianity in large numbers during the first fifty years of the Mission were the Nadars. This movement among the Paraya and the Pulaya outcastes synchronizes with the work done amongst them in other parts of Travancore. In 1859 J. Hawksworth of the Church Missionary Society at Tiruvalla in North Travancore began preaching to the Pulayas of that region, and formed them into congregations. Charles Mead after leaving the L M. S. in 1853[81] evinced great interest in the Pulayas of Trivandrum. He held services for them and formed a school for their children.[82] Mateer took greater interest in these people and at the risk of

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[81] After the death of his wife Johanna Coelestina Horst on 9 February, 1848, Charles Mead married Miss. Louis Biddulph, a Christian lady belonging to the Paraya caste. This caused considerable irritation and displeasure among the missionaries. They maintained very vigorously the distinction between the missionary and the local Christian and the marriage of a missionary with a low caste Christian lady was considered a disgrace by them. Some of the local Christians also took advantage of this and fomented quarrels in the churches. It was to avoid worsening of the situation that Mead left the Mission in 1853. General Cullen invited him to Trivandrum and appointed him as th Superintendent of Government District Schools. He served the Travancore Government in various important positions while at the same time working for the welfare of the depressed classes.

[82] C.M.Agur, *op. cit.* pp. 905-6.

offending and estranging the more respectable converts from the Nadar and the Ezhava castes, he formed them into congregations and devoted a great deal of time and work to them.

When these classes rapidly advanced in religion and education, the higher castes began to persecute them. But after a few complaints were filed in the courts and fines imposed, it quickly ceased and the Christians were allowed to enjoy their religion in an outwardly pacified atmosphere.[83] The result was that in 1867 among this class alone there were twelve congregations with 2649 adherents.[84]

The most remarkable event in 1838 was the establishment of the Trivandrum Mission district. The permission to establish a Mission station was obtained from the Raja through the good office of General Fraser, the British Resident. The Raja granted to the Mission a piece of wasteland at Kannammula, 5 miles from the city of Trivandrum, to erect the Mission premises. The missionary John Cox and his wife came to Trivandrum in April 1838 and were received very cordially by the British and local authorities. He took charge of the Mission and commenced his work with the aid of an interpreter.[85]

The Trivandrum Mission district progressed much under John Cox. At the beginning of his tenure he found in the whole district about forty professing Christians of whom two alone were baptised. Within a short time he established four schools catering to 115 children and the number of adherents to Christianity increased to 107.[86]

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[83] *L.M.S. Report, 1865*, p. 91

[84] *L.C.*, p. 310

[85] *L.M.S. Report 1839*, p. 68; *L.C.*, P. 289

[86] *L. M. S. Report, 1840*, p. 67

John Cox had to work mostly among the lower classes and amidst considerable opposition. Under him were seven readers, of whom four worked in the Neyyattinkara locality and three in the neighbourhood of Trivandrum.[87] John Cox visited all the remote areas of the Mission district and opened new congregations. His labours were mainly spread out among the poor. The government officials were corrupt and they did all that they could to oppose the spread of the religion. Cox says:

> They hate Missionaries because they know that their extortions will be checked by them ... The laws of the country affecting Christians are for the most part founded on just principles, but, as I have shown, they are grievously violated by the subordinates of the Government.[88]

To fight against this scheme of things meant risking one's life. Cox writes: "I know if exposure is made, martyrdom to some may ensue; but if righteousness demands the expsoure, the lot of the righteous will be to be martyred".[89]

From the very beginning of his missionary career he worked a lot for the uplift of slaves and to convert them. But the opposition from the castes already converted, especially the Nadars, was such that he felt very dejected. He made the people accept the fact that the slaves were their brethren and their equals before God and that refusing to admit them in the churches was therefore a sin. But these arguments did not produce the desired effect. Cox says: "The principle of caste is so deeply seated in them, that it is no easy thing to eradicate it; and it is spread

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[87] *L. M. S. Report, 1840,* p. 67

[88] *Ibid., 1841,* p, 72

[89] *M. M. C.*, vol, VI, (September, 1842), p, 135

so widely as to render it a most difficult task to trace out all its ramifications".[90]

When John Cox left the Mission in 1861, Samuel Mateer took charge of the Trivandrum and Quilon Mission districts in September 1861. When Mateer started his work in the Trivandrum Mission district, opposition to the spread of Christianity almost ceased and general sentiment toward Christianity was favourable. There was an influx of new members, so much so that the small chapels built ten or twenty years ago became quite inadequate to accommodate the congregations. In the district there existed only two good chapels, one at Kodiyannurkonam and the other at Neyyattinkara.[91] The burden of building churches fell heavily on the missionary. The new policy of the Travancore Government to grant rights and privileges to all people irrespective of caste or creed, made the missionaries hopeful of the future of Mission and the end of caste disabilities for the converts.[92]

In 1838 J. T. Pattison had joined J. C. Thompson at Quilon. This gave a new life to the Mission. Several doubting Thomases were won for the faith. The converts to this Mission district were mainly drawn from the Ezhava caste. The missionaries attest the fact that compared with the Nadars, who in large numbers embraced Christianity, the Ezhavas showed less zeal and faith.[93] In 1848 a strong movement developed among the slaves of the Quilon Mission district. A number of slaves attended the evening schools without any direct opposition from the caste Hindus. These poor and degraded people showed great desire to embrace Christianity, but the intimidation of their masters formed a serious obstacle to their attending religious instruction.[94] When the Quilon Mission district was taken over by Mateer in 1861, several Christian families also joined it.[95] In 1866 this Mission district contained 357 Christians, 5 preachers, 52 church members and 5 schools with 165 pupils.[96]

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[90] *L. M. S. Report, 1842*, p. 67

[91] *Ibid*, *1864*, p. 102; *1866*, p. 93. When Cox left the district there were 758 professing Christians, 18 congregations, 31 local agents and 13 schools. *Ibid., 1861*, p. 97

[92] *Ibid., 1866*, p, 93. In 1866 in the Trivandrum Mission district there were 2533 Christians, 21 preachers, 16 schools and 307 pupils *Ibid., 1867*, p. 150

[93] *Ibid., 1845*, p. 99

In reviewing the progress of the Mission during this period, the work done by the wives of the missionaries among the womenfolk needs special consideration. These ladies did not occupy any official position or salaried post, but as a labour of love, they devoted a good deal of their time to the supervision of institutions started for the welfare of the womenfolk of Travancore. As early as 1821 Mrs. Mault, who had some knowledge of lace-making, began to teach this industry to a few girls.[97] Mrs. Abbs and Mrs. Baylis began the Embroidery Industry. Lace Industry was carried on steadily in Nagercoil and Embroidery Industry in Neyyur, Marthandam, Parassala and Trivandrum. The workers in these industries were paid a reasonable salary and the surplus was used mostly in building up institutions intended for women. They also took special interest in

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[94] *Ibid.*, *1849,* p. 89

[95] *Ibid.*, *1865,* p. 93

[96] *Ibid*, *1867,* p. 150

[97] Mrs. Mault to the Foreign Secretary of the L. M. S., dated Nagercoil, 2 June 1830, *E. M. M. C.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, December, 1830), p. 540. The Travancore Mission lace became widely known in India and abroad and won many prizes in the Madras, Paris, Chicago, and other famous exhibitions.

the education of girls by establishing Boarding Schools.[98] The above-mentioned institutions served as agencies for the diffusion of Christianity among women during this period. As a result of the efforts of these ladies, women began to take active interest in the various sectors of the Mission.

The churches established by the missionaries remained as local autonomous units. There was no organisation to interlink these churches and the missionary was the sole patron. He was a friend, philosopher and guide to these churches.

A marked step in the direction of improving the efficiency of the local agents of the Travancore Mission was taken in February 1860. The T. D C. in that year resolved to institute an order of agents above that of the 'catechists or readers', and called it the order of 'evangelists'. A few of the most able and devoted among the readers in the employment of the Mission were admitted to the new grade of evangelists.[99]

The period from 1817 to 1865 forms the era of great ingatherings in the history of the Mission. In this period the Mission spread itself out and possessed the land. Extensions have taken place in every direction through the courageous and enterprising activities of the missionaries. Although there was much opposition to the development of the Church, the missionaries were not discouraged. They pushed forward fearlessly and produced an impression in the land favourable to the spread of Christianity. The movements for their birth rights made the Christians more powerful and conscious of their own status. Opposition gradually subsided and for that, the efforts of the Medical Mission contributed much After 1860 the Church became quite self-conscious. The formation of an enlightened Christian community influenced by western education and civilization gave added hopes for the missionaries to make fresh experiments in their Travancore Mission.

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[98] Letter of Mrs. Mault, dated Nagercoil, 6 October 1820, *Ibid.*, vol. XXIX, (October, 1821), p. 439

[99] *T.D.C., Report. 1860,* p. 21.

CHAPTER IV

EMERGENCE OF THE INDIGENOUS CHURCH

1866-1908

The policy of the L.M.S. in India was to create "an enthusiastic, aggressive, Christ-like Church, Hindu in sentiment, in modes of thought, in presentation of theological truth which shall present Christ to the millions of India, not as the God of the conqueror and master, but as the loving Saviour who has won devotion and the consecration of her own ablest sons".[1] This was well reflected in the missionary activities of the L.M.S. in Travancore. By gradual stages local initiative was made to substitute European leadership.[2] Therefore it was only in the fitness of things that the Christians of Travancore should arrogate to themselves the full responsibilities of administering their own church. The headquarters of the L.M S. caught in a financial bottle-neck, had advised its overseas Missions to maintain strict economy and achieve the triple objectives of self-support, self-government and self-propagation.[3]

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[1] Richard Lovett, *The History of the London Missionary Society, 1795 to 1895*, vol, II, p. 258

[2] Letter from J. Duthie, dated Nagercoil, 7 November 1860. *M. M. C.*, vol, XXV, (January, 1861), p. 17. "One of the prime objects here", says James Duthie, "is to raise up a class of men who shall be able to teach others also, and if possible to send them forth, not as hirelings, on the so - much work so - much pay principle, but in the

The missionaries of the L.M.S. in Travancore were ready to accept the idea of entrusting the responsibilities of the churches in the hands of the local people.[4] Accordingly

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true spirit of all acceptable service in the cause of God, seeking the salvation of souls. We shall do something towards securing such service if we can succeed in creating a deeper sense of *individual responsibility* among our agents; and nothing, I believe, that we can do will tend more speedily and thoroughly to the accomplishment of the end than our leaving them to select plans for themselves, and rather acting the part of counsellors and advisers, than marching before them on all occasions as leaders..."

[3] J. A. Jacob, History of the L. M. S., pp. 149 - 50. The phrase, "a self - supporting, self - governing and self - propagating church" has in *locus classicus* in a document issued in 1851 by the Church Missionary Society under the far seeing leadership of Henry Venn. He elaborated the following thesis: "The object of the Church Missionary Society's Mission, viewed in their ecclesiastical aspects, is the development of Native churches, with a view to their ultimate settlement upon a *self-supporting, self - governing and sef - extending system.* When this settlement has been effected, the Mission will have attained its *enthanasia* and the Missionary and all Missionary agency can be transferred to the regions beyond". Ibid

[4] Duthie writes: "The time has come, I believe, when, in our Travancore Mission, this matter ought to be earnestly considered. And now that the people are beginning to see that their duty is, we may hope that, at no very distant date, a few atleast of our large congregations will be presided over by native pastors supported by themselves; thus to some extent relieving the European Missionary of his work

systematic work in this direction started from 1866. The plan was to group round a fairly strong church and a few smaller congregations, to give them pastorate status and to place them in the charge of an ordained Indian. Four Christians, who worked in the Mission as evangelists, were ordained, one as a missionary and three others as pastors over the pastorates.[5] The formation of the pastorates and the ordination of four Christians were events of great importance in the history of the Mission and they marked the inauguration of a new era in its progress. The missionaries gave great importance to the formation of pastorates and laid high hopes on their scheme. "We hope soon to see" Baylis wrote, "additions made to the number of Native Pastors, and to see churches anxious to have such 'over them in the Lord', and to contribute liberally for their support, and thus a self sustaining and self-governing Native Church be formed and built up, a strong witness for the truth, and a powerful instrument for extending the Redeemer's Kingdom in the darkland".[6] Besides the ordination of pastors

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among the Christians, and enabling him to open up new fields of evangelistic enterprise among the great masses of the people round about us, upon whom, as yet, it has been found impossible to bestow that amount of patient, continued and persevering toil which this description of work so pressingly demands... The time seems to have arrived when a commencement should be made; and, by the blessings of God, I doubt not we shall see greater success in Travancore than yet our eyes have been privileged to behold". Letter from James Duthie to Dr. Tidman, dated Nagercoil, 3 July 1865. *M. M. C.*, vol. XXIX, (September, 1865), p, 256

[5] *L. M, S. Report, 1867*, pp. 142 - 43. The first four ordained Christians were Rev. N. Devadasan, Rev. S. Zacharia, Rev, C. Masillamani and Rev. C. Yesudiyan. The salary of a pastor was Rs. 15, which the congregation had to raise. J. Duthie, "The Travancore L. M. S. Mission" *H. F.*, vol. VII, (October. 1896), pp. 361 - 68

[6] *L. M. S., Report, 1867*, p 134

the office of deacons was also newly created to assist them. The responsibilities of the deacons were many and varied. They were to labour heartily that the congregations might be self-supporting.[7] The T.D.C assumed the responsibility to appoint pastors in the churches. Concrete steps were thus taken to establish an independent, self supporting and self-governing Church in Travancore.

The L.M.S in Travancore also required fundamental changes in organization, in order to unify the churches of all the Mission districts and pilot them through the vicissitudes of circumstance. With this end in view a new code of rules was drawn up and under it the "South Travancore Church Council" was brought into existence.[8] Its primary duty was to open up regular and legitimate channels for the expression of local opinion on issues relating to the Mission.[9] The members of the council were the Society's European missionaries, all native ministers, and representatives elected from every district. The preliminary meeting of the South Travancore Church Council was held in Neyyur on 28 July, 1874, and was presided over by Yesudiyan, the Indian missionary of Tittuvilai district.[10] The

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[7] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 104. Frederick Baylis, the missionary who served at Neyyur, exhorted those elected to the office of deacons at a public meeting, "to be prayerful and diligent in stirring up the people to regularity of attendance on Divine Service, and liberality in giving to the cause of Christ, and themselves to set an example in these things, and generally to help their Catechist in his work". *L. M. S. Report, 1867*, p. 143

[8] The Chronicle of the L.M.S for the *year* 1877, p.35

[9] L.M.S Minute Book, 1875–1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of, the T.D.C., pp. 60-61

[10] J.A. Jacob. op.cit., p.163

recommendations of the council were sent to the T.D.C for consideration and action. Such unions were formed only in three other places, British Guinea, Cape Colony, and Madagascar. The Directors considered these associations as a proof of progress, and as an additional instrument of value in promoting further progress. The Chronicle of the L.M S for 1877 says:

> Among the most pleasing signs of advance in the Travancore Mission, is the establishment of a Union among the Churches for the purpose of mutual counsel and the extension of Christ's Kingdom among their heathen countrymen. This Union has now taken the form of a Church Council.[11]

The Mission was ushered into a new dimension of vigorous growth with the establishment of the pastorates. In 1866 the Nagercoil Mission field was reconstituted into districts: Tittuvilai, Kottaram, the pastorates of Nagercoil and Dennispuram.[12] The Nagercoil Mission district became the chief centre of educational and religious work under the Travancore Mission. Several congregations advanced materially and gave full support to their pastors. The pastorates had made decided progress and this induced the missionaries to establish more of them upon an entirely self-supporting basis. James Duthie writes:

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[11] *The Chronicle of the L,M. S. for the year 1877*, p. 363

[12] J. Duthie, *loc. cit,.*. *L. M. S, Report, 1867*, p. 142

(1) *Tittuvialai district* – Nine of the most northerly congregations containing 776 adherents were formed into a separate sub-district called Tittuvilai This district was put under the charge of the native missionary, C. Yesudiyan, ordained in 1866.

(2) *Kottaram district* - The eight congregations to the south-east of Nagercoil numbering 1530 souls were added to those of the old James Town district in the extreme south-east forming a new district called Kottaram,

(3) *Nagercoil pastorate* - The congregation at the head station, Nagercoil, with 653 adherents was constituted into a pastorate. It came under the control of Nilakantan Devadasan, ordained in 1866.

> I find, too, that there are now in the district, exclusive of the pastorates, ten congregations, entirely self-supporting, that is, which pay the full salaries of the native ordained preachers labouring in them.[13]

The Nagercoil Home Church also became self-supporting and in a large degree self-governing This gave Duthie great satisfaction, and at the same time reminded him of the difficulties that lay on the way to self-government. He writes:

> Our position in Travancore, generally, is one of great promise as regards self-support of our congregations .... To become self-governing will be a matter much more difficult of attainment, which can only be brought about under the guidance of the European Missionary.[14]

The Nagercoil Home Church became the largest and the best in the Mission.[15]

In addition to the above organizational reforms various subsidiary agencies were also made to work within the framework of the church at different levels. One was the women's-fellowship groups. Educated women were taken into such groups of voluntary workers. They moved about

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(4) *Dennispuram pastorate* - South of the Tittuvilai district was the congregation of Dennispuram, numbering 358 adherents in ten villages. This was formed into a pastorate and put under the control of C. Masillamani, ordained in 1866.

[13] *Ibid*, *1885*, p. 88

[14] *Ibid.*, *1899*, p. 136

[15] *Ibid.*, *1905*, pp. 122 - 23. The Christians in the church were from nine different castes. They all mixed freely in public worship and congregational life. This was, to be sure, a harbinger of a sense of equality which was acclaimed to be the bed - rock of Christianity. Richard Lovett, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p, 267

amidst the laity in groups of two and enkindled a sense of awareness to the divine mission and spirit of fellowship and prayed for those who were still foreign to the message of Christ.[16] This noble work also resulted in the conversion of a good number. Richard Lovett says:

> There are many who are really-though secretly-followers of Christ. They do not leave their homes and join the Christian community; their names are not in the Church list, nor are they reckoned among the number of Christian adherents: but we believe that they belong none the less to Christ's Church, and have their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life.[17]

Young Women's Christian Associations (Y W.C.A.) also served to rouse a feeling of self-realization among women and engendered a spirit of Christian fellowship. About Nagercoil and the Christian women there Duthie says:

> Christian teaching has done much for this village. It is now a common sight to see women sitting reading in their leisure hours. Many of our bad customs have been abolished, there is a higher tone of morality among us, and sometimes we meet together and talk about God and Christianity.[18]

Corresponding to the Y.W.C.A., the Yonng Men's Christian Association (Y.M.C.A) worked among men. Qualities of leadership, and Christian piety developed enormously as a result.[19]

The activities of the Mission at Nagercoil were directed also toward the degraded outcastes and classes inhabiting the remote villages. The Parayas were the first to be converted. But when large numbers of Nadars embraced Christianity the missionaries had to turn to them apparently to the neglect of the former. However, in 1892 a great commotion took place in many of the Paraya villages of the Nagercoil Mission district manifesting itself in a general willingness and readiness to accept Christianity. Their object was primarily social reform, or elevation in social rank and the bettering of their material condition. Duthie writes:

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[16] *L. M. S Report*. *1866*, p. 129

[17] *Op. cit.*, vol. II, pp. 251 – 52

[18] *L.M.S. Report*,. *1887*. p. 143

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 137

> Change of religion is contemplated not so much from a sense of spiritual need as from a growing conviction that it is only in connection with Christianity that the desired social reform can be effected. But in many cases a real spiritual need is also discernible, and a disregard for, or want of faith in their own demonolatry, the result of long years of more or less conflict with Christian influences, is pretty generally manifest.[20]

The agents of the Mission took advantage of this to work intensely among these downtrodden people. As a result a number of Parayas became Christians in the district.[21] Evangelical work also started among the silk-weavers of Kottar.[22] But they were indifferent and disinterested in the matter of educating their children. The L. M. S. Report for 1896 says:

> Among the silk weaver caste the work is not increasing. That this is the result of utter indifference to female education rather than hatred to Christianity, seems to be proved by the fact that a Hindu school

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[20] *Ibid., 1893,* p. 145

[21] *Ibid.,* p. 146

[22] *Ibid., 1887,* p. 142

> started right in their midst early in the year has proved a failure.[23]

Tittuvilai and Kottaram districts made considerable progress in this period. Tittuvilai showed most encouraging signs of the success of evangelical work. The caste Hindus evinced great interest in their children learning the Christian doctrine. The women's - fellowship groups carried on their labours assiduously and many were converted.[24] After the death of C. Yesudiyan in 1885, Tittuvilai ceased to be a separate district. James Duthie took charge of the district and an evangelist was appointed there.[25] The special feature of the Kottaram district was that from the very beginning of its formation it had been urging the people tirelessly to help maintain the church and to make it self-sufficient. From the limitless help offered, it was possible to meet all the financial needs of the church.[26]

The pastorates established in the Nagercoil Mission district developed considerably.[27] But before long the worm of degeneration crept in. It was mainly because the pastors lacked dedication and faith. People shunned the pastors as they found them to be poor substitutes to the missionary. There was a tangible reluctance on the part of the people to unclasp the strong hand of the missionary. The pastors were given much more salary than an unordained agent and the people who were to support them were poverty-stricken, Likewise, the arbitrary selection of pastors and their unlimited tenure created bitterness, especially when they happened to be self seeking and ungodly. In the pastorates the dominant castes established their supremacy thereby making a subtle return to casteism. Disputes arose in the Agasteesvaram, Tamarakulam and Zionpuram pastorates between the people and the pastors. Despite all these, the pastorates on the whole progressed and the missionaries were sure of their success. "I make bold to say", Duthie says, "after some experience, that, if we have unsatisfactory people, we have not a few who are fighting the good fight against terrible odds in many cases, struggling towards the light from darkness itself, growing into truth, self-denial, diligence, patience, humility, gratitude and love".[28]

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[23] *Ibid., 1896,* p. 106. The result of the work was that in 1908 in the Nagercoil Mission district there were 10410 adherents, 2284 church members, 5 ordained pastors and four missionaries. *L. M. S. Report, 1909.* p. 346

[24] *T. D. C Report, 1883,* pp. 24 - 25

[25] The district progressed to such an extent that in 1908 there were 14 out - stations with 1283 adherents and 244 church members. *L. M. S. Report, 1909,* p. 346

[26] *Ibid,, 1863,* p. 117

[27] James Duthie, *loc. cit.* The pastorates established in the Nagercoil district between 1866 and 1908 were, Nagercoil, Santapuram, Zionpuram, Agasteesvaram, Voiravila, Dennispuram, and Tamarakulam.

The Neyyur Mission district received a new lease of life from 1866 onward. Samuel Zacharia, one of the four Christians ordained in the beginning of 1866, became the pastor of the Neyyur church. The opposition to the propagation of the gospel was on the wane and the number of professing Christians increased greatly.[29] But the absence of external opposition only helped to create further problems. There was deterioration on the part of both local agents and chuch members in the general tone and earnestness of Christian spirit. Baylis writes:

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[28] *Ibid*

[29] *L. M. S. Report 1872, p. 104*

> Ours is no easy task. It is that of raising a peopel who have been sunk for ages in the grossest forms of superstition in ignorance, evil customs, foolish and hurtful lusts, and entire indifference to spiritual realities, apathetic and inert by nature, as well as overrun by falsehood and covetousness.[30]

Baylis died on 17 May, 1877 and was succeeded by I.H. Hacker on 4 November, 1879.[31]

With a view to evangelizing the hill tribes, I.H. Hacker presented a plan before the T.D.C. "The introduction of Christianity among them" he observed "would save them from ruin, and if funds were available I have no doubt that a very interesting Mission could be established among them".[32] He succeeded in getting a small grant from the Directors to work among the tribe called the Kanikkar. An itinerant medical - evangelist and a catechist were sent to work among them. Steadily the work progressed and a number of people were won for Christ.[33]

Another movement commenced among a class of weavers of the Neyyur Mission district in 1898. A very influential man of the caste by name Devakaranan together with his family embraced Christianity. The missionary reports say that as a result of his influence a whole village, comprising of nearly 300 people, joined Christianity.[34]

Muhammedans, who were professed antagonists to Christianity, also began to show interest in Christian philosophy.

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[30] *Ibid*

[31] J. A. Jacob, op. cit., p. 182

[32] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 185

[33] *L. M. S. Report, 1890*, p. 109

[34] *Ibid., 1899*, p. 118

They permitted their women and children to attend Christian instruction, and to read and write. Their opposition and orthodox views gradually disappeared.[35]

Sabbath schools or Sunday schools were established under the aegis of the churches to give instruction to the children and the youth. Christian men and women of different congregations were requested to volunteer for this work. The Sunday schools did much to spread enlightenment. The Medical Mission at Neyyur played a key role in the diffusion of the gospel during the period. It proved a source of great blessing to all irrespective of caste and creed.[36] A number of out-stations, each with its dispensary, were maintained by the Medical Mission at Neyyur. A medical-evangelist was placed in charge of each dispensary. The medical evangelists, who had passed through a course of training in medicine and surgery, were competent to treat routine dispensary cases.[37]

Connected with the Medical Mission was the newly started Leper Asylum. The work among the lepers was started in 1888 by Dr. Sargood Fry, a medical missionary at Neyyur. He treated several lepers and converted a few of them to Christianity.[38] Of the Medical Missions maintained by the Society in India the one at Neyyur was the most important and most successful. It served as a powerful auxiliary to direct religious work. The Raja of Travancore also took keen interest in the development of the Medical Mission.[39]

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[35] *Ibid., 1888,* p. 145

[36] *Ibid.,* 1885, p. 94

[37] *Ibid.,* 1887, pp. 149 - 50

[38] Richard Lovett, *op. cit.,* vol. II, p. 234

[39] *Ibid.,* p. 234. For a good description about the Medical Mission, see pp, 223-33

Between 1866 and 1908, four pastorates were formed; Neyyur, Kadamalaikunnu, Deviyodu and Kallukuttam. These pastorates made considerable progress and became centres of religious activity. The people in general evinced great interest in the activities of the churches and an enlightened minority was created in Neyyur through the missionary exertions. They aspired for a life of freedom and wanted to get rid of the old order. The barriers of superstition started giving way to rational thinking. I. H. Hacker writes:

> Slowly, very slowly, the old order changes, yielding place to the new, and the Medical Mission is doing its share in bringing about the change, planting the seed of the Word in the hearts of many who otherwise would never receive it, proclaiming the Gospel with a practical demonstration of its beneficence that the most uneducated can understand, breaking down, by its healing influence, bigotry and prejudice that other-wise would be insuperable barriers.[40]

The missionary activities in the Parassala Mission district were mostly confined to the Nadar, the Paraya and the Pulaya castes when the deputation of the L. M. S. under Mullens visited Travancore in 1866. Through the intense missionary labours of G. O. Newport large numbers of Pulayas and Parayas were converted.[41] Though belonging to the lowest strata of society they made rapid progress on the religious and social fronts. In 1868 Newport was succeeded by James Emlyn. He was primarily concerned with the missionary work among the fishermen or Mukkuvas of the sea-coast, who were Roman Catholics. In the beginning this evangelistic probe was a success. Emlyn says:

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[40] *L. M. S. Report, 1901*, p. 208. In 1908 in the Neyyur Mission district there were 79 out - stations with 14,440 professing Christians. *Ibid.*, *1909*, p. 346

[41] L. M. S. Minute - Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 180; *L. M. S. Report 1868*, p. 115. From the Pulayas and the Parayas about 2, 649 persons of all ages were added to the number of Christians of the district. *L. C.*, p. 310

> Our success has been considerable – not only do a large number remain steadfast - thus far; and give promise of continuing as, by means of our success the work is spreading and all the fishermen from Cape Comorin to Quilon have obtained a measure of freedom never before known.[42]

But within a few years, because of the active labours of the Roman Catholic priests, most of those who joined the Protestant religion returned to their old faith. The schools and churches were abandoned in course of time. The L.M S. missionaries admitted that the work among the Christian fisherfolk proved a complete failure.[43] But Emlyn's work among the slave castes produced tangible results. He recorded in 1874: "The people that have, as a body, made the greatest progress during the last few years are the converts from the Pariahs and Puliars."[44]

But when the Society cut down grants to its Missions in January 1868 the missionary activities in the Parassala Mission district were adversely affected.[45] The general work was carried on with the young catechists, who were good

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[42] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 180. The work among the fishermen spread widely and all of them from Cape Comorin to Quilon were impressed by the liberal ideas of Protestantism.

[43] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1889 - 1897, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 67

[44] Samuel Mateer, *Native Life in Travancore*, p. 315

[45] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 176

and useful servants. In spite of all difficulties the Mission progressed. When Mrs. Murray Mitchell visited the Parassala district in 1882, it was in a prosperous state.[46] In 1890 Emlyn was succeeded by J. Knowles.

For the better working of the district, Knowles divided it into thirteen centres, each centre being placed under a pastor or evangelist, who in addition to the care of his own congregation or congregations,[47] exercised a general supervision over the other agents and congregations in his centre. The arrangement worked well and it was followed in other districts as well with encouraging results.[48]

Another arrangement made in 1893 for the promotion of peace and the maintenance of a Christian spirit in the district was the establishment of a District Council of eight members, who were elected by the Mission agents themselves by ballot.[49] The duty of the council was to assist the missionary in dealing with the numberless questions, great and small, related to the Christians of the district. It was practically the administrative faculty of the Mission and it adjudicated upon all district matters of dispute.[50] It had the welfare of the people at heart. An Educational Council was also formed in the district to deal with all matters connected with the schools. Its members were chosen from among the leading men of the district.[51]

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[46] Mrs. Murray Mitchell, *In South India*, p. 233. She says: "The whole congregation looked most respectable and intelligent, and one could hardly believe they had ever been so sunken and degraded as the common heathen are now. The transformative power of the Gospel is indeed marvellous, and education and training have done wonders".

[47] Sometimes they were in charge of more congregations.

[48] *L. M. S., Report, 1896*, p. 111

[49] *Ibid., 1894*, p. 185

[50] *Ibid*

When he started his work at Parassala, J. Knowles, like G. O. Newport was attracted to the Parayas of the district. Knowles established a congregation of the Parayas at Karakkonam.[52] The establishment of another missionary organization during this time namely, the Salvation Army, with Nagercoil as the headquarters, was a blow to the L. M S in Travancore. Although its advent in Travancore took place in 1889, it was only in 1892 that it came to the notice of the public. John Cox, who served as a missionary in Trivandrum district, was instrumental in bringing the Salvation Army there.[53] After his resignation from the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S in 1861, he settled as a coffee planter in Oliver's Estate, situated twenty miles north-east of Nagercoil. He invited ardent workers of the Salvation Army to the Estate, who preached to the employees and converted some of them to Christianity. The first converts to the Salvation Army were from the Nadar community. Gradually they extended the field of operation and concentrated their attention to the conversion of all classes of people. Several Christians of the L. M. S at Nagercoil and surrounding areas became eager supporters of the new Mission. This had its repercussions in the Parassala Mission district. where many joined the Salvation Army. Although the missionaries of the L. M. S did not view its foundation favourably, they maintained cordial and diplomatic relations with their cousins in proselytization.

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[51] *Ibid., 1901,* p. 210

[52] *Ibid., 1893,* p. 151

[53] Major M. C. Griffiths, "A Brief Resume of the History of the Salvation Army in Kanyakumari District", *Scott Christian College, Nagercoil, Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, November, 1961*, pp. 52 – 53

At the same time they actively countered the zealous work of the Salvation Army to restrain their converts from crossing over to the new fold.[54]

The arrival of Foster in 1899 was a turning point in the history of the Parassala district. He concentrated his attention on the quality of the work rather than on its quantity, in order to strengthen the Mission. He started a movement in the direction of consolidation[55] The result was that Parassala became the largest and most successful Mission district in the whole of India.[56]

From 1866 onwards the work in the Trivandrum Mission district progressed a great deal. The missionary work was extended to all castes. When Samuel Mateer[57] established himself as missionary at Trivandrum, there was no congregation in the town. The Mission station was at Kannammula, which was a bit away from the town. Mateer succeeded in shifting the Mission premises to the Cantonment area, in the heart of the town. He tried his best to bring the Mission into close contact with the caste-Hindus and officials in Travancore society. He held meetings twice a week for Hindus and Muhammadans. It is stated that several Hindus desired to become Christians, but the loss of wealth and position, and the prospects of social ostracism precluded them from embracing it. Mateer writes:

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[54] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1889 – 1897, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., pp. 67, 78, 122 – 23, 154

[55] In his report to the Society he writes: "We should like to see a movement in the direction of strong consolidation. Our energies must be spent in strengthening our fortifications rather than in extending them. A strong, determined front will do more towards the demoralisation of the enemy than an extended skirmishing order". *L. M. S Report, 1902* p. 203

[56] *Ibid., 1909*, p. 346. In 1908 there were four ordained pastors, 2301 church members and 21345 adherents.

[57] The history of Kerala owes a lot to Samuel Mateer. His books *The Land of Charity,* and *Native Life in Travancore,* are authentic works on the different aspects of the history of Travancore.

> A very serious hindrance to the open conversion of the higher castes arises from the Travancore law that a convert to Christianity is regarded as dead to his caste and family, losing all his rights to inheritance, office and social position. Especially is this severe upon the Sudras and other Marumakkattayam or Nepotistic castes, who cannot ordinarily possess individual property, and, therefore, have the right to maintenance from the common family fund, which, according to the lawyer's theory, is indivisible, though not so in actual practice. Even this right is lost by conversion, and cases are constantly recurring of persons being thus cast out homeless and helpless.[58]

When the missionary work progressed among the Hindus, a counter movement to revive Hinduism was started by some educated Hindus. They erected a hall and a reading room to conduct discourses on Hinduism. They permitted the low castes to learn the Vedas and other sacred books prohibited to them by ancient laws.[59] This very much helped the spread of enlightenment among the generality of the public in the first decades of the twentieth century.

Special efforts were made by Mateer to propagate the gospel among the Kanikkar hill men of Ponmudi and Atiramala. Eight itinerating catechists in two groups of four each were sent to these hills. The first party sent to Ponmudi also worked among the Ezhavas, the Pulayas and

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[58] *L. M. S. Report, 1890,* p. 114

[59] *Ibid., 1888,* p. 147

the coffee estate labourers at the foot of the hills, of whom some were converted through their work. The hill men were reluctant to accept Christian instruction and education, although some influence was exerted. The mission to the hill men proved a failure.[60]

The Pulayas attracted the attention of Mateer from the very beginning of his work in the Trivandrum Mission district. He established schools for spreading the light of education among them. The students who came out of these schools were appointed to serve in the Mission and coffee estates.[61] Some of them were appointed in the Pulaya schools by the government.[62] Many congregations of the Mission were composed of the lowest castes like the Pulayas and the Parayas. His splendid work for their uplift earned Mateer the title of the 'poor people's missionary'[63] and 'Pulayar Padri'.[64]

Caste prejudices were conspicuous among the Christians and it was one of the chief obstacles to the spread of the gospel in the Trivandrum Mission district. On one occasion, several Nadars went away from a meeting at a chapel because some Pulaya Christians were present there. At another place the Parayas were threatened with beating by Pulayas if they should come to the place where the latter assembled.[65] The caste Hindus threatened the lower classes with dire consequences to prevent them from joining the Christian religion.[66]

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[60] *Ibid., 1887,* p. 154

[61] *T. D. C. Report, 1879,* p. 15

[62] *L. M. S. Report, 1887,* p, 156

[63] *Ibid., 1892,* p. 155

[64] I. H. Hacker. *A Hundred Years in Travancore,* p. 53

[65] *L. M. S. Report, 1890,* p. 113

Mateer left the Travancore Mission in March 1891 on account of ill-health and Harold T. Wills succeeded him in 1892. He worked in Trivandrum and opened a hostel for low caste students, who were anxious to pursue their studies at the Maharajah's College in Trivandrum. He was of the opinion that through the elevation of the low caste people, the missionaries could reach the caste Hindus. When the missionary work progressed among the lower castes, the caste Hindus also began to evince interest in their development. It gradually helped mitigating the rigours of caste oppression. The high and the low began to move together. H. T. Wills writes:

> The very quick and sure progress made by these degraded people, when once the Gospel reaches them, is a powerful argument in favour of Christianity with men who can only appreciate some sensible sign. Our care for the outcastes is by degrees breaking down the rigid exclusiveness of castes. Pulayars may now be seen working in or near Brahman streets – a thing impossible a few years ago.[67]

During the period between 1866 and 1908, three pastorates were formed in the Trivandrum Mission district.[68]

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[66] Mateer writes: "Sudras still, in general, oppose the conversion of the former slave castes. They frighten them with the threat that they shall be compelled to eat beef and shall be shipped off to foreign parts. They resume fields rented out if their dependents become Christians, and threaten and seek to crush our agents when they help the poor and oppressed". *Ibid., 1891,* p. 142

[67] *Ibid., 1898,* pp. 136-37

[68] *Ibid., 1903,* p. 208, The pastorates established were, at Trivandrum, Neyyattinkara, and Nellikakkakuzhi

For fostering leadership and initiative among the Christians of the district a District Council was formed. Pastors and evangelists were the ex-officio members. Other members were selected by the whole body of the catechists from among themselves. The missionary was the president of the council, and all matters of discipline, appointments and even finances were tabled and discussed. Though it was an advisory council to the missionary, in effect its decisions were regarded as final.[69] According to Arthur Parker, who was missionary in Trivandrum from 1900 to 1926, the council was formed "in a line with the ancient practice in India of the Panchayat, or Caste Council of Elders, whose advice is sought and decisions accepted in all social, domestic, and in most religious matters".[70] As far as possible the members of each little church with the deacons and catechist settled all matters affecting the discipline of the members, the maintenance of the church and the Sunday schools. Matters of greater importance were referred to the District Council [71]

Since 1864 the question of extending missionary activities to the unevangelized portions between Trivandrum and Quilon was continually mooted in the T. D. C. This region of Trivandrum Mission district was densely peopled. The backwardness of the Quilon district was also brought to the notice of the Committee.[72] For these reasons it was decided to start a Mission centre midway between Trivandrum and Quilon. So in February 1895 a new district was formed with its centre at Attingal and put in charge of two missionaries, W. D. Osborne and H. Hewett. According to the missionaries the district of Attingal as a whole was steeped in ignorance. The bulk of the people served as serfs to the land owners. There were few cosmopolitan public schools. Education as it then existed was almost a preserve of caste people alone Therefore, as a first step in enlightening the people, schools were established and Christian teaching was imparted to the children of Attingal and the surrounding areas.[73] The Ezhavas of the district influenced by western education imparted through these schools revolted against the old order and agitated against the political inequalities and social injustices. The caste superiors were so indifferent to the lot of these downtrodden men that the latter in their desperation chose to get converted to Christianity which offered to elevate them in the social scale.[74] There was a mass exodus from the Pulaya and other slave communities into the Christian fold.

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[69] *Ibid*

[70] *Ibid*

[71] *Ibid., 1905,* p. 137. In 1908 in the Trivandrum Mission district there were 64 out-stations, 2434 church members and 14024 adherents. *Ibid., 1909,* p. 346

[72] L.M.S. Minute Book, 1875-1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T.D.C., pp. 27, 174

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[73] *L.M.S. Report, 1896*, pp. 114-15

[74] About the movement W.D.Osborne writes as follows: "They (Ezhavas) are the small farmers and skilled artisans of the country. Being somewhat better educated, they are beginning to assert themselves, and to claim attention from the Government. The movement has in it a very strong religious element also, although the religious side is not so clearly manifest - western education and civilization has gone very far to destroy the faith of a people in a system which thrives upon the ignorance and superstition of its adherents, and has resulted in a religious discontent among these better educated classes. The outlet of this discontent is in the direction of agitation against the political inequalities and injustices under which they are suffering in consequence of Brahman dominance. Many of these people are now turning to us and asking us to take them into the Christian fold, hoping thereby to receive through us their just rights and privileges", *Ibid., 1889*, p. 138

Thus the new mission succeeded in winning several members for the church.[75]

The Quilon Mission district suffered without a resident missionary after the death of J. C. Thompson. The Santapuram district was abolished as a separate district in 1866 and its missionary F. Wilkinson was sent to Quilon.[76] He directed his attention mainly to the Kuravas and the Pulayas. But the staff of local agents was quite inadequate to the wants of the district. The annual meeting of the T. D. C. held at Nagercoil in August 1877 discussed the poor condition of the Quilon Mission district and expressed the fear that inactivity in the district would attract other Missions there.[77] The district, however, received remarkable impetus and development from 1881 with Joshua Knowles at its head. Yet lack of funds and men stared him in the face and he was constrained to tune himself to a restricted field.[78]

The Christians of the Quilon Mission district mainly belonged to thelow castes and were extremely poor. They were treated as slaves by their masters, such as the Nairs and the Syrian Christians. Though slavery was abolished by the government in principle, those who lived in hilly places were treated as slaves.[79] Conversion of Kuravas and other ow classes to Christianity was followed by persecution by caste Hindus.[80] These factors presented serious obstacles to the large scale conversion to Christianity The T. D. C and the missionaries did their best to infuse courage in the Quilon Mission. But all their efforts were fruitless and the district remained the most backward among the Mission districts.[81]

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[75] *Ibid., 1905*, p. 140. The result of the work was that in 1908 in the Attingal Mission district there were 17 out-stations, one ordained pastor, 8 agents, 157 church members and 1904 adherents. *Ibid., 1909*, p. 346

[76] *T. D. C. Report, 1866*, p. 5

[77] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1875 - 1888, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., pp. 27 - 28

[78] Ibid., p. 165

[79] *T. D. C. Report 1883*, p. 4

In the beginning of the twentieth century there was a strong movement for a closer union among the churches of the L. M. S in Travancore. The missionaries desired the advancement of the Church to a degree of independence. The first step toward closer union among the churches was manifested in the foundation of the Travancore Native Evangelistic Society in 1901. Its object was to preach the gospel in the unevangelized parts of Travancore and establish churches. The characteristic feature of this society was that it was sponsored by the Christians of the Mission. It made a tremendous impact through gospel work.[82]

Another scheme for the closer union of the self - supporting churches and pastorates of the L. M. S in Travancore was the South Travancore Church Union founded in 1904. The pastorates were practically independent of the Mission and of one another. The union consisted of all the missionaries of the Society, all ordained ministers and one lay member for every hundred church members. It exercised a general control over all the churches, in all matters concerning the call, examination appointment, ordination, discipline and dismissal of pastors and any other matter concerning the pastors and their churches.[83]

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[80] *L. M. S. Report, 1885,* p. 97

[81] *Ibid., 1909,* p. 346. In 1908 in the district there were 30 out - stations 599 church members and 3266 adherents.

[82] *General Assembly, 1908,* pp. 17, 44

[83] *L. M. S. Report, 1904,* p. 200

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The union was also a court of appeal in all disputes between the pastors and the churches. Every year at its annual meeting the work of each pastorate, its records and its accounts were reviewed. In this way the control of the Church passed from the missionaries to a body largely controlled by the laity. The Christian community was thus entrusted with the administration of the churches. The Christian ministers, leading Christians and missionaries, hoped that this union would strengthen and consolidate the churches.[84]

The year 1906 saw the centenary celebration of the L. M. S. in Travancore. A deputation of the Board of Directors of the L. M. S. under Dr. Wardlaw Thompson visited Travancore to attend the celebration. Representatives from all the Missions in South India were present. In a hundred years it had grown to a well organized Church with solid foundation. Commenting on its envious growth J. C. Jones, a missionary of the American Board, who was present there, observed:

> The churches are developing in life and in appreciation of the joy of self-support and of the dignity and honour of self-government. Seventeen of the churches are now under Indian pastors...On the whole, it is one of the best organized missions in India, and has received the manifest tokens of God's presence and blessing during the century; and it has had the peculiar fortune of being manned by sturdy leaders, who were devoted men of God.[85]

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[84] I. H. Hacker, *op. cit.,* pp. 64, 102

[85] *L. M. S Report. 1907,* p. 122

CHAPTER V

UNION MOVEMENT AND FORMATION OF S.I.U.C. 1908

In the last decades of the nineteenth century there originated a new movement for welding together all the evangelizing agencies in India into one Church. There were about sixty such missionary organizations. All of them had made considerable headway in their own field of gospel work, although there was no uniformity and harmony among them. Enlightened Christians and their prominent leaders deprecated the fissiparous tendencies that divided church from church and sect from sect.[1] Therefore they were looking forward to a time when all the churches would be united—"a Church that will not reflect Scotch Presbyterianism nor German Lutheranism, but which combine into a harmonious whole the best features of all denominations, and be suited to the social instincts and national characteristics of the native converts."[2] They felt that Indian Christianity could not be cast in the same mould as English Christianity. The

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[1] S. Sethianathan. "National Church of India", *I. E. R.*, vol. XIV, (January, 1888), pp. 293 - 96

[2] *Ibid*

Bishop of Durham, writing about Indian Missions, observed: "We must become as Indians to the Indian, if we would win India to Christ".[3] Their aim was to create an independent Church in India which should be neither Episcopal nor Presbyterian nor Congregational, but the outcome of the national spirit.

The union movement in South India got impetus from similar movements elsewhere. It was in China, in 1867, that the missionaries of the Reformed Church in America and the English Presbyterian Church initiated a similar move. The result was the organization of the *Tai-hoe* or Great Council of Elders: it was neither an English Presbytery nor a Reformed Church Classis,[4] but a genuine independent Chinese Christian Church.[5] In 1874 about 800 Christian men, many of whom were distinguished religious leaders in the various evangelical churches of Europe and America, assembled in London to organize an alliance, not of churches as such, but of Christian men representing all the churches of Evangelical Christendom. The object of this alliance was first, that its members, and through them, the churches of the Protestant world might "*realize in themselves and exhibit to others* that a living and everlasting union binds all true believers together in the fellowship of the Church of Christ"; and the second, by various methods, of forming, guiding, and wisely employing a united evangelical public sentiment, to promote the interests of the Christian Church and the glory of God, in advancement of true faith and holy living.[6]

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[3] *Ibid*

[4] The old time honoured names *presbytery* and *classis* were given up for the term used by the Congregationalists, *church council*, after the formation of the S. I. U. C.

[5] *General Assembly, 1907*. p. 7

[6] *I. E. R.*, vol. II, (October, 1874), p. 168

The Nadar Christians of Tinnevelly played an important role in the union movement. They showed a deep interest in western education and were taught in the institution founded by the Scottish Presbyterians in 1837, later to be called the Madras Christian College. Through the influence of the college, some of the Tinnevelly Anglicans got associated with Presbyterian missionary work and became Presbyterians. They became Congregationalists when they were in Madras, Methodists or Lutherans in Trichinopoly, and L. M. S. members in South Travancore. Wherever they went they joined the new Christian communities, showed great loyalty to their mother church, and interest in the union of all the churches.[7]

With the birth of Indian nationalism some of the educated Indians within the Christian Church demanded more openings for Indian leadership. At the Decennial Conference held at Calcutta in 1882, the leading Bengali Christians demanded that the "Native Church be safely left alone, to a certain extent at least".[8] The enthuasiam it engendered soon spread to other parts of India. The most remarkable symptom of the influence of rising nationalism upon the young Christian Church in South India was the movement originated by Dr. S. Pulney Andi. He founded the National Church of India on 12 December, 1886, to weld together into one united Church the members of the several evangelizing agencies in India It was the first major indigenous movement in the chronicles of Indian Christianity.[9]

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[7] Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India, The Movement Towards Union, 1900-47*, pp. 30 – 31

[8] *Ibid.*, p. 26. A leading part in the Indian National Congress was taken by a prominent Christian Kali Charan Banerjee, and the Christian Community all over India was stirred by new aspirations. "Awake, Indian Christians. Swadeshism is in the air. Is it without lessons for us?" asked D. L. Joshi, a fervent Christian minister in Bombay. D. L, Joshi, "A call to Indian Christian", *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, (March, 1906), p. 195

The movement sought unity, and its motto was "cherish prayer, that all may be one".[10] The movement was non-sectarian and adopted all those principles which were common to all creeds taking the Bible as the one sole guide and canon. To Pulney Andi, it was only an attempt to overcome the ecclesiastical divisions by accepting a national programme. He says:

> The object and aim of the National Church movement is to establish in India a Church which shall, as far as its distinctive features go, be characterized by its sympathy with the material sentiments and aspirations of Indian and profit by oriental modes of thought and religious peculiarities in the local development of spiritual truth leading perhaps eventually to new schools of Scripture interpretation and bringing into prominence doctrines which are at present obscurely apprehended and therefore inadequately appreciated.[11]

The idea of establishing an independent Church in India, free from the influence of the foreign Missions, was prevalent everywhere. Dr. Norman Maclord, who visited India and inspected the Missions during this time, was firmly of the view that the Indian Church should be deprived of the sectarianism of the west. He says:

> By such I mean, one which is organized and governed by natives themselves as far as possible, independently

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[9] Parani Andey = Pulney Andi (ed.), *A Collection of Papers Connected with the Movement of the National Church in India*, p. 57

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 58

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 107

> of ours, we would ofcourse claim as Christians and fellow subjects to be recognized among its members or if it would please both parties, serve among its ministers and rejoice always to be its friends and generous supporters.[12]

The National Church of India was considered to be the Church of the future in India.

Although the movement was based on sound principles, it was not easy to live up to them and hence it fared badly in actual working. The greatest stumbling block on the road to a united Church was that there was hardly any union of heart. The Christians under the several missionary organizations thought that National Church movement was an anti-missionary institution aimed at driving out the missionaries. They committed a sad mistake in attempting to accomplish a union of Christians for religious purposes, before uniting them together for social purposes. The reluctance on the part of the Christians belonging to several Missions made the organizers of the National Church movement request the Board of Directors of Foreign Missions in Europe and America to form an Indian Church, "by giving their efforts a permanency by which they will be leaving an everlasting monument, of their victorious labours and magnanimity in this land of the honour and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."[13] Although it failed in its aim, it succeeded in infusing a spirit of togetherness among the Christians. G.J. Solomon, who presided over the second anniversary meeting of the National Churtch of India held in 1888, said:

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[12] *Ibid*.. pp. 118 - 19

[13] Letter to the Board of Directors of Foreign Missions in Europe and America. *Ibid*., p. 346

> One thing it has succeeded in doing, it has proved beyond the shadow of doubt that a Church can exist in South India without the aid of European funds and European supervision.[14]

In the year 1883 the subject of union was brought before the General Synod of the Reformed Church in Aemerica by Dr. Jacob Chamberlain, to whom the Church owed much for its unity. The synod called upon its representative in South India, the Classis of Arcot, to initiate such measures "as shall bring to tend together the Churches of Presbyterian polity in India."[15] In the same year a conference of representatives of the Mission Boards of the Presbyterian churches of United Kingdom was held in Edinburg. The resolutions passed by this body had a deep significance and they formed the basis for the later unions.[16]

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[14] *Ibid.*, p. 173

[15] *General Assembly, 1908*, p. 18

[16] The resolutions were: "(1) It is in the highest degree desirable that Mission Churches should be encouraged to become independent of the Home Churches, i. e., self - supporting and self - governing, self - government naturally following upon self - support. (2) It is desirable that Churches organized under the Presbyterian order, and holding the Reformed faith, should be placed under a Presbytery within territorial boundaries suitable for effective government, and that such Presbytery wherever constituted should as far as practicable include all the Presbyterian Churches within its bounds, by whatever branches of the European or American Churches originated. (3) In the incipient stages of the Native Church, it is most desirable that the foreign missionaries should be associcated with *the* Presbytery. either as advisers only, or as assessory members with votes. (4) It is desirable that Presbyteries of Native Churches should be represented in Supreme Courts at home, the development and full organization of independet Native Churches being what is to be aimed at, whether these are founded by a single foreign Church. or by two or more such Churches." *Ibid.*

The influence of the movement on the different churches of South India was tremendous. In 1900 the South India Missionary Conference held at Madras, gave a definite shape to the unification plans of the South Indian churches. Dr. J. H. Wyckoff, a leading missionary in the American Mission in Arcot, had been made convener of the committee to bring about the union[17] He was of the opinion that episcopacy was the best form of church government for India. He brought the matter of Presbyterian union before his own Mission Committee, and at the end of February 1900, representatives of the Arcot Mission and the two Scottish Missions (United Free Church and Church of Scotland) met. Being cynical about the existing state of affairs. they recommended a closer union of the local churches of the three Missions at the earlist possible date.[18] Thus the United Church was formed at a provisional synod held at Vellore in October 1901, with Jacob Chamberlain as Moderator. About the importance of the union thus formed, J. H. Maclean writes:

> It is the only Church that has actually been formed as the result of a union and it is not beyond the limits of possibility that ere long its boundaries may be so largely extended as to make the name more appropriate.[19]

The progressive move of the Scots and the Americans in South India was a stimulus to the Presbyterians in other parts of India. At the council meeting held at Allahabad in 1901, thirteen different church organizations of Reformed faith and Presbyterian polity came together and decided to form one single Presbyterian Church for the whole of India. In December 1904, the first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in India was held. The Southern Presbyterians or the United Church, joined the all India organization on the condition that they would be free to withdraw altogether from the Presbyterian Church in India if they succeeded in their negotiations "in the interest of a more practical union in South India" [20] The union of the Presbyterians in 1904, marked an epoch in the history of the Church in India.

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[17] *Report of the South India Missionary Conference held at Madras*, January 2-5, 1900, p. 70

[18] J. Morrison, "Presbyterian Union in India", *I. E. R.*, vol. XXVIII, (January, 1902), pp. 224 - 45; J. H. Maclean, "The South Indian United Church, *Conference*, (February, 1903), p. 12

[19] *Ibid*

In September 1901 the American Madura Mission appointed Revs. J. S. Chandler, Tracy, Herrick, Thiruthuvadasan and Y. J. Taylor, as a "Conference Committee to consider with representatives of the L. M. S Missions in South India the question of any possible union".[21] This action met with prompt response from the L. M. S Missions. In January 1902, the South India District Committee appointed Revs. W. H. Campbell, Bernard Lucas, C. G. Marshall and A. W. Brough to confer with the Madura Committee, "with a view to obtain such union and co-operation as is possible between the American Madura Mission and the London Missionary Society".[22] J. S. Chandler of the American Mission at Madura, and Bernard Lucas of the L. M. S. Mission at Bellary, sent letters to the T. D. C., "asking if a Committee can be formed from this Committee (T, D. C.) to join them with others in considering the question of closer relationships with other missions".[23] The object was approved by the T. D C. and

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[20] *Presbyterian Alliance in India, proceedings,* December, 1904, pp. 20-22

[21] *General Assembly, 1905,* p. 1

[22] *Ibid*

[23] L. M. S, Minute Book, 1897-1909. Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 129

it appointed the missionaries, James Duthie, G. Parker, A. Parker, D. Fells, I. H. Hacker and Dr Bentall, as their representatives on what was now constituted as the Joint Committee on Union.[24] The first official Joint Committee was held in Madura in 1903.[25]

The Joint Committee recommended to its Missions a brief confession of Faith as a basis of the union. The committee was against imposing any creed upon the different churches, which, formed the union or of limiting in any degree or manner the freedom, either of the church or the individual, to interpret the fundamental facts of the Christian religion.[26] Four Missions, L. M. S. of Travancore and South India, with the Madura and Jaffna Missions of the American Board, accepted the simple Confession of Faith as a ground work of union.[27] James Duthie, the missionary of the L M. S in Travancore and a member of the United Church of Scotland, was in favour of securing a union with the Presbyterians. According to him all churches should realize their 'essentialo neness' and beware of placing undue emphasis upon denominational differences, "which the Indian Church is bound, in due time, to disregard."[28]

The first general assembly of the United Churches of South India connected with the L. M. S and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Madura, was held at Madura in July 1905. Some pastors and leaders of the churches connected with the L. M. S in Travancore were sent to the general assembly.[29] In the address of welcome made by J. S. Chandler, he pointed out the relations of the American Madura Mission with the L. M. S in Travancore. He observed:

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[24] *General Assembly, 1905,* p. 1

[25] Bengt Sundkler, *op. cit.,* p. 40

[26] *General Assembly, 1905,* p. 2

[27] *L. M. S. Report, 1906,* p. 112. Vide App. XI

8 *General Assembly, 1905,* pp. 20, 24

> The Mission in Travancore is our venerable L. M. S cousin, and as we think of her century of life and work, we wonder how it feels to be so old. And yet she shows no signs of decrepitude, but on the contrary has all the youth and sprightliness that Methuselah must have had when he had only turned his first hundred years.[30]

The union thus inaugurated, was one whose object was neither to pin down the churches to any denominational organization, nor to restrict, by the imposition of any creed, the freedom of either church or individual. It was a union which brought together all Christians who acknowledged Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour. The individual churches and the local unions of those churches were autonomous in respect of administration and their conceptions regarding faith. The Missions which formed the union, were requested by the executive committee to avoid denominational bickerings on flimsy grounds. The executive committee resolved:

> We stand, therefore, not as a union which excludes any of like precious Faith, but as a union which invites into its fellowship all who feel that, in the deeper and larger matters of the Christian life, they are one with us in loyalty and devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ.[31]

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[29] *L. M. S. Report, 1906,* pp. 122 - 25

[30] *General Assembly, 1905,* p. 2

[31] *Ibid.,* p. 79

When matters stood thus the Presbyterian Church in South India entered into negotiations with the United Churches of the L M. S and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in South India and Ceylon, on the subject of closer union.[32] The object of the negotiations, was to amalgamate these denominations into one body with a view to developing a self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating Church. Dr. J. H. Wyckof, in his address to the second general assembly of the United Churches of the L. M. S and the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in South India and Ceylon, held in July 1907, observed:

> We, missionaries and our Mission organizations, are the scaffolding only; the Indian Church is the building. At the beginning the scaffolding is very much in evidence; but as the building rises, the scaffolding gradually sinks out of sight, and finally disappears altogether ... More and more must the Indian Church accept duty and responsibility, if she is to live, and grow, and become a power in the land.[33]

The second general assembly adopted a resolution[34] to be sent to the Presbyterian Church in India and to the Triennial

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[32] *Ibid., 1907,* p. 2

[33] *Ibid.,* p. 5

[34] The following is the text of the resolution: "The attention of the General Assembly was called to the recent proposal of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India for Church Union and to the appeal made by the Triennial Conference of the Baptists in Calcutta in February last for Union and co - operation in mission work in India. The General Assembly expresses its gratitude in view of the earnest, fraternal spirit of the proposal and appeal, and welcomes the deep yearning which they express for a broader union and a closer fellowship and co - operation in Christian work throughout this land. As an organized Ecclesiastical Union embracing 135,000,

Conference of the Baptists, which determined the future of the movement The general assembly of the Presbyterian Church of India at its meeting held on 28 December, 1907, at Calcutta, resolved to take such steps as would facilitate a union. Accordingly, the South India Synod of the Presbyterian Church adopted the scheme of organic union, and it resulted in the formation of the S. I. U. C on 25 July, 1908.[35]

The first general assembly of the S. I. U. C was held in the L. M. S chapel at Davidson Street, Madras, from 25 to 27 July, 1908.[36] The churches of the Madura and the Jaffna Missions of the L. M. S. in their joint capacity as 'The United Churches of South India and Ceylon', and the churches of the Arcot Mission of the Dutch Reformed Church and the United Free Church Mission of Madras in their joint capacity as 'The South India Synod of the Presbyterian Church', decided to unite organically as one body. The duly appointed representatives of the two above mentioned bodies, constituted the Provisional General Assembly of the S. I. U. C.[37]

Christians of two missionary societies and four missions, and with an extraordinary horizon of prospective union, we welcome these fraternal approaches and stand prepared to join our brethren of other denominations in any effort to increase fellowship among Christ's followers in the land. And we express the conviction that the Lord is calling his people in India at the present time not only to co-operation in work, but more especially, and first of all to ecclesiastical union, that co-operation and fellowship may find the freest scope and the most enduring basis". *Ibid.*, pp. 12 - 13

[35] *Ibid., 1908*, pp. 3 – 4

[36] *L. M. S. Report, 1909*, p. 15

[37] *General Assembly, 1908*, p. 4. Numerically the S. I. U. C. was preponderantly Congregational. Of the total Christian Community of 142,000 shown at the time of the union one-tenth was Presbyterian or Reformed. Of the Congregationalists, 74,000 were from Travancore. *Ibid.*, p. 71

The constitution of the S. I. U. C was free from the fissiparous ideas which hindered the development of thought and life in the Indian Church. The declared object of the union as embodied in its constitution was, "to bind the Churches together into one body with a view to developing a self-supporting self governing Indian Church, which shall present a united living testimony to Christ, and worthily represent to the world the Christian ideal".[38] Regarding the Confession of Faith, which was its very marrow, there was to be a consensus. But it was not to be a hard and fast preface as is clear from the proviso: "As the Confession is a human instrument, it is understood that persons assenting to it do not commit themselves to every word or phrase, but accept it as a basis of union, and as embodying substantially the vital truths held in common by the uniting Churches"[39] The S I. U C reserved to itself the right to revise its general Confession of Faith whenever the consensus of the united body demanded it.

The S. I. U. C administered its affairs through local churches, councils, and a general assembly. A local church was defined as a company of believers assembling for public worship The officers of the church were a pastor, set apart by ordination for preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments and elders or deacons, chosen by the church, who with the pastor constituted the church committee.[40] So far as the church government was concerned the constitution gave much more liberty to local churches than was allowed to them in the scheme drawn up by the South India District Committee, before the formation of the S.I.U. C.[41] To the local church was given the authority to manage its own affairs either by the whole body of members or through its church committee. The Mission reserved the right to appoint a representative on the church committee, if a church had official connection with a Mission.[42]

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 4

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5

[40] *Ibid.*, pp. 5 - 6

[41] *L. M, S, Report, 1909*, p. 16

A church council was composed of all the ministers and lay representatives of the churches within a defined district. The church council was entrusted with the overall control and care of the churches within its bounds. The constitution says:

> It organizes, disbands, and recognizes Churches; ordains, installs, dismisses, and disciplines ministers; gives counsel and aid to churches and unorganized companies of believers; decides references and appeals regularly presented; maintains order; carries on evangelistic work; and appoints representatives to the General Assembly.[43]

Each church council was permitted to adopt its own system of rules which conformed to the general scheme of union. Two or more adjacent church councils were at liberty to form themselves into a synod for reciprocal help and effectiveness of work.

The general assembly, which met once in two years, was composed of representatives, ministers and laymen, appointed by the church council.[44] The general assembly was the representative body of the S. I. U. C and its counsellor. It was an advisory rather than a legislative body. The constitution states: "It assumed no authority *per se* over the Churches; but will consider references that

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[42] *General Assembly, 1908*, p. 6

[43] *Ibid*

[44] *L, M. S. Report, 1909*, p, 16

come to it through and with the approval of the Church Councils".[45] Its general duties were, to render advice on matters of organization to church councils, to co-operate with the Missions in carrying on evangelistic and other Christian work, to unite in cordial fellowship all the ministers of the churches, promoting their intellectual and spiritual development, to tabulate statistics of the churches and publish a biennial report and to devise ways and means of strengthening and advancing the interests of the whole Church.[46]

All the Protestant Missions in India were influenced by the union movement in South India and the formation of the S. I. U. C. It paved the way for the establishment of a union of all the Protestant churches in India in 1947.[47] The Christian communities realized that they belonged to a great 'United Church'. It enabled the missionaries to exhibit a united front, helping them to economize while efficiently propagating Christianity. It also afforded an example of unity to the non - Christians of South India.

It is significant that the churches connected with the L. M. S in South India, especially Travancore, took a very keen interest in the union movement and the formation of the S. I. U. C. A leading role in the movement was played by a missionary of the L. M. S in Travancore, James Duthie. His chief ambition was the union of Christians in India and for this he toiled many years. He was a distinguished leader in the movement for the organic union of the Congregational churches of South India, and was unanimously elected chairman of its first general assembly held in 1905. When the scheme of union was being charted out at Kodaikkanal in June 1905, James Duthie observed: "We have been making history today".[48] This proved prophetic. The Travancore Mission of the L. M. S formed a part of the S. I. U. C with its formation in 1908.

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[45] *General Assembly. 1908*, p. 6

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 7

[47] In 1947 was formed, as a result of further unions, the Church o South India and the Church of North India.

"So a real Indian Free Church Council has been started and we shall not be satisfied till other denominations have joined", was the conclusion of the missionaries of the L. M. S in referring to the S. I. U. C.[49] All enlightened Christians stressed that the new Church must be an Indian or National Church.[50] J. P. Cotelingam declared: "There is undoubtedly a great future before the South India United Church, if the faint beginnings of Swadeshism in it be wisely directed".[51] W. A. Wilson, who represented the Presbyterian Church in India, stressed a different aspect. He observed: "A United Indian Church would appeal to non-Christians in a way that divided Churches cannot do".[52] With the formation of the S. I. U. C the different church polities actually fused into one for the first time.

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[48] *General Assembly, 1907*, p. 8

[49] Bengt Sundkler, *op. cit.*, p. 44

[50] *Ibid.*, p. 42

[51] *General Assembly, 1908*, p. 50

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 9

CHAPTER VI

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE MISSION

To the missionaries of the L. M. S goes the credit of having taken the first tangible step toward the introduction and diffusion of English education in Travancore. The Catholic missionaries, who were the first among the Christian missionaries that came to the land, were in the beginning indifferent to the educational needs of the people. But the Protestant missionaries, who started their work in Travancore in the beginning of the nineteenth century, took a very keen interest in the introduction and spread of English education. The ancient method of instruction was displaced by the English method of instruction introduced by the missionaries.[1]

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[1] *T. S. M.*, vol. II, pp. 445 - 46. The ancient educational institutions of Kerala were mainly of three kinds, viz., the *ezhuttupallies* or pial schools, *kalaries* or military schools, and the Vedic or Sanskrit schools. See for details, A. Sreedhara Menon, *Kerala District Gazetteers. Trivandrum*, pp. 649 - 50

William Tobias Ringeltaube, the first Protestant missionary in Travancore, was responsible for the introduction of English education in Travancore. All his early catechists, who were employed to preach the gospel, were also school masters.[2] He was interested in establishing a seminary to train youths to preach the gospel and act as teachers. He believed that this measure, if usefully employed, would help to establish Christianity in Travancore almost independently, and make it flourish even in the absence of European missionaries.[3] To train youths and promote the religion Ringeltaube proposed the following plan to the Society:

> A Seminary of twelve youths to be erected and maintained. The annual expense of a boy, 18 star pagodas per-annum; total 216 pagodas per annum, equal to £82.
>
> These youths, when fit, to be employed as itinerants, and every one so employed, to receive two star pagodas per month.[4]

This very modest request of Ringeltaube, five months after his arrival in Travancore, was not granted by the Society.

From 1806 to 1816 Ringeltaube devoted his whole energy to evangelistic work, and wherever he went he carried with him the mission of English education.[5] With his limited funds he succeeded in establishing six schools in Travancore for the education of Christiansand non-Christians. Instruction

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[2] Waskom Pickett, *Christian Mass Movements in India*, pp. 215-16

[3] *Ringeltaube's Journal*, 12 September 1806. William Robinson, *Ringeltaube, The Rishi: Letters and Journals*, p. 82

[4] Ringeltaube to R. C. London, dated Palayamkotta, 11 September 1806. *Ibid.*, p. 96

[5] *T, S. M.*, vol. II, p, 446

was given in the three R's. Christian children had to attend the catechism and read the New Testament or other religious books. Books were supplied free to students and teachers by the missionaries at Tranquebar, but not in sufficient number. Those who could read and pray fluently were recruited as teachers from congregations. But the difficulty experienced by Ringeltaube was that the people were reluctant to send their children to schools. Girls were never sent to schools.[6] Ringeltaube patiently worked amidst obstacles and the number of students gradually increased. He wrote:

> Our schools come on tolerably well at Eatamoly, Pittalam, Ahticadu, and Tamaraikulam. Some children have learnt to read. Among the children that attend are some heathen and three Mohammedans. The number of children attending school is sixty.[7]

The boys educated in his schools were sent into the villages to propagate the gospel.[8]

Ringeltaube wanted to establish a network of schools in Travancore and for that he expected all help from the Resident, Col. Munro, who evinced great interest in his plans.[9]

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[6] W. T. Ringeltaube to Col. John Munro. dated Quilon, 30 March 1813. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9, pp. 1876-77.

[7] Ringeltaube's letter, dated Mailadi, 4 January 1813. William Robinson, *op, cit.*, p. 114

[8] James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, vol. IV, p. 283

[9] Col. Munro was responsible for the establishment of government vernacular schools in Central and North Travancore. A college for the Syrians was started at Kottayam through his patronage, and he made liberal grants for its growth. Parameswara Iyer says: "Since his administration, the state has made remarkable strides in education" Ulloor S. Parameswara Iyer, "Colonel Munro", *K. S. P.*, vol. II (November, 1931), series 7, pp. 41-70

He desired to open more schools, to impart education to the children of poor families. But the financial problems prevented him from taking steps in that direction. In his reply to the queries of Col. Munro, relating to the state of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S., Ringeltaube observed:

> If any additional funds were to be granted as has been intimated, I think, Star Pags. 1200 per annum, would be an adequate sum for the whole Mission. For establishing an adequate system of education 600 or 300 will do.
>
> An adequate system requires a Printing office, with solid buildings, workmen for printing and binding materials etc. Without such an institution a Mission is a helpless and abortive production. It is also necessary that new converts and children should be boarded for sometime, which again requires buildings and *batta*, also several married missionaries. I have hitherto struggled with the bitterest want.[10]

Within a brief period of his missionary endeavour, Ringeltaube laid the foundations of English education in Travancore.

The most important name, connected with the educational work in Travancore, is that of Charles Mead. He was a very enthusiastic worker who threw himself heart and soul into the cause of education till his death in 1873.[11] He believed that the hope of the Mission was in the rising generation, whose prejudices had not hardened into habits. To him the only weapon available to mould the young men was

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[10] W. T. Ringeltaube to Col. Munro, dated Quilon, 30 March 1831. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9. pp. 1876-77

[11] T. K. Velu Pillai, *The Travancore State Manual*, vol. II, p. 696

the right type of education to tailor self-respecting and adventurous individuals. Richard Knill, who joined him in 1818, named this plan *De Propaganda Fide*. He writes:

> We have no ministers to advise with, or to make proposals to; but we have laid down a plan, which we call *De Propaganda Fide not without instruction*, like th Papists, but by the establishment of schools, and if it be carried with spirit, there will probably be more than thirty schools or nurseries, belonging to this mission, at the close of the present year.[12]

The missionaries were fully convinced of the deplorable state of education in Travancore. Only very few were taught even the rudiments of knowledge. The remedy the missionaries proposed for such a deep rooted malady was the establishment of good schools in all the principal towns and villages of Travancore.[13] They found that people in general, "though ignorant, were very attentive and teachable; a few were intelligent and inquisitive".[14] To attain their objective, schools were established in most of the places where congregations were formed. They were open to all irrespective of caste and creed.[15] Richard Knill writes:

> We havo no less than ten congregations, old and new, belonging to the mission, with a church and a school attached to several of them and preparation is going

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[12] Richard Knill to Col. Munro, 4 January 1819. *L. M. S. Report, 1819*, p. 126

[13] *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXX, (January, 1822), p. 36

[14] Letter from Charles Mead, 26 September 1820. *Ibid.*, vol. XXIX, (March, 1821), p. 123

[15] Charles Mault to Rev. Morell, St. Neots, dated Nagercoil, 6 October 1820. *Ibid.*, (October, 1821), p. 430

forward to establish a catechist and schoolmaster in many of the surrounding villages.[16]

Although there was opposition to education at first, gradually it vanished and a large number of students flocked to their institutions.[17] But lack of funds often stifled their efforts to open more schools to meet the demands of the people The scheme of education imparted from the missionary schools was of an elementary standard. The medium of instruction was the vernacular.[18] Apart from reading, writing, simple arithmetic, Tamil grammar, geography, history, and English, scripture lessons with special reference to duty toward God and one another were given.[19]

A few of the orthodox non-Christians were reluctant to send their children to the missionary schools, where Christian and backward class students studied. With a view to educating the students belonging to such families, a school room was built in the Bazaar of Nagercoil, and named it the Bazaar School. It was a very successful experiment. The school was well-attended and the students were from Hindu and Muhammadan families Those who were willing, were instructed to attend the catechism and scripture lessons, besides the usual lessons.[20]

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[16] Letter from Richard Knill, 27 October 1818. *Ibid.*, vol. XXVII, (May, 1819), p. 208

[17] Charles Mault to C. J. Metcalfe, dated Nagercoil, 24 July 1823. *Ibid.*, vol. II, (New Series, December, 1824). pp. 541 - 42

[18] *L. M. S. Report, 1890*, p. 109

[19] *T. D. C, Report, 1883*, p. 20; *1865*, p. 12

[20] *E. M. M. C.*, vol, XXX, (January, *1822*). p. 37; *L. M. S. Report, 1822*, pp. 83 - 84

The missionaries were also very much interested in educating the Parayas, the Pulayas, the Kuravas etc. These poor people were taught in the same schools where the caste Hindu students attended, and they evinced a great desire to learn. But the hostile attitude of their masters was a very serious obstacle to their regular attendance.[21] In 1861 a charity school for the Pulayas was started to extend the blessings of education to the people belonging to that community in and around Trivandrum. Several students who studied in the school later filled useful positions in the Mission, in coffee estates, or in domestic service.[22] Separate schools were started to provide education for destitute children.[23] Lack of funds however prevented the progress of the orphan schools. To educate the adults, who worked in the day time to support their families, evening schools were opened, which in a large measure catered to the needs of the poor.[24] Over and above all this, Anglo-vernacular schools were started to train the brightest boys, who had passed through the vernacular schools. They were given a working knowledge of English. Those who successfully completed their studies in the Anglo-vernacular schools, were appointed as preachers and teachers after further training in the Nagercoil Seminary[25]

The missionaries of the L. M. S were also pioneers in the field of female education in Travancore. Before their arrival in the early years of the nineteenth century practically no education was given to women in Travancore as in other parts of India, and their status, compared to men, was very low. Woman was considered only as a servant to man. "In life they had nothing to do except eating, sleeping and marrying".[26] The birth of a girl in a family was not viewed as a happy event. The reaction of a missionary to this state of affairs could be seen in the following words:

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[21] *Ibid., 1824.* p. 86

[22] *T. D. C. Report, 1879,*, p. 15

[23] *L. M. S. Report, 1837*, p. 83: Report of Nagercoil Station from January to June 1829. *E. M. M. C.*, vol, VIII, (New Series, July, 1830) p. 323

[24] *L. M. S, Report, 1835*, p. 66; *1836*, p. 69

[25] *Ibid., 1866*, p. 128

> In childhood and youth they have no education, no cultivation of any kind whatever. There is not a single girls' school in all India, and the mother being herself entirely unlettered and being the devoted victim of a dark cruel superstition, is utterly incapable of improving her child.[27]

The missionaries wanted to put an end to this state of affairs and improve the status of women by imparting education to them. They thought that the subject of female education was of greatest importance to the future of India.[28] Thus in 1820 they opened a Boarding School for the females amidst great opposition from the caste Hindus.[29] This meant, they had to fight the deep rooted custom of keeping women in cloister and in purdah. The missionaries wrote:

> By introducing education among them, we shall not only raise them in the scale of society, but also disarm

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[26] V. M. Premnath *Keralattile Adimakal*, p. 97

[27] Letter addressed to the editor of the Liverpool Courier. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXVIII, (December, 1820). p. 531

[28] *T. D. C. Report, 1864*, p. 18

[29] Letter from Messrs. Charles Mault and John Smith, dated Nagercoil, 28 June 1820. *E, M. M. C.*, vol. XXIX, February, 1821), p. 86

> them of much of that prejudice which in many instances is found to be such a barrier to our plans.[30]

Through good-intentioned and calculated steps, education was popularized among the people.[31]

The primary object of the Boarding School for girls, started by the missionaries, was to impart a plain education along with religious instruction. Books with a religious bias were usually recommended for reading. The course of study consisted of Christian and moral education, reading, writing, arithmetic and geography.[32] As soon as the students were able to read, they were required to regularly read the scriptures. After memorizing Watts" '*Small Catechism*', they were given other compendiums of the Christian religion, and then led to the gospels and epistles. A few lessons in English were taught in the highest classes.[33] In 1821 lace-making industry was introduced on a small scale in the school to help defray the expenses of the school. The profits made out of lace-making were utilized for the boarding and education of students.[34]

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[30] The Report of the Nagercoil Station from January to June 1829. *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, July, 1830), p. 322

[31] *Ibid*. One of the things they did to popularize education was to publish a Tamil tract of 12 pages "On the Advantages of Female Education" printed at the L. M. S. Press in 1831. This tract exhorted the people to send their girls to schools since Hindus of Bengal, Bombay and Madras had already sent their girls to schools.

[32] B. K. Zachariah, Contribution of the Christian Church to the Progress of Education in Kerala, (M. Ed. Thesis, University of Kerala, 1960), p. 75

[33] Letter from Mrs. Mault to the Foreign Secretary, L. M. S., dated Nagercoil, 2 June 1830. *E M M. C.*, vol, VIII, (New Series, December 1830), p. 540

At first the missionaries experienced much difficulty in getting students due to the opposition of non-Christians to female education. The missionaries were suspected of improper motives in educating the girls.[35] Still they managed to collect a few female students. They were provided with board and clothing, and for their education, no fee was charged. The first letters of the missionaries show that the prejudice of parents against female education was so great that the girls who came for one week were withdrawn in the next. Such difficulties proved a source of great unhappiness to the missionaries. Mrs. Mault wrote:

> We determined to persevere, hoping that in time the advantages of instruction would be perceived, and others become willing to avail themselves of them.[36]

Although there was great opposition, the school continued. When the improvement of girls, who attended the school, became manifest more of them began to attend it, and prejudice against education of women gradually vanished.

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[34] *Ibid*. This new industry gradually expanded and different trades like sewing, spinning, knitting, embroidery etc, were taught. The main reason for this expansion was that, they were able to secure new markets for the sale of the products The South Travancore Mission lace became widely known in India and abroad and won many prizes in the famous exhibitions held at Madras, Paris, Chicago, London and other places.

[35] A Cavalry Officer, *Diary of A Tour Through Southern India, Egypt and Palestine in the years 1821 and 1822* p. 58

[36] Mrs, Charles Mault to the Foreign Secretary, L. M. S. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. VIII, (New Series. December, 1830), p. 540

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The progress and success of the Boarding School induced the missionaries to make further experiments in the field. More schools for girls were opened Orphans and slaves were admitted into them. To attract more non-Christian girls, lady teachers were appointed in the schools. The experiment proved successful and a large number of girls sought admission.[37]

The establishment of separate schools for girls was a blessing to the slave girls. The missionaries desired to give them education and some means of self help. Lace-making helped them to eke out a living. In this way several slave girls became self-reliant and free.[38] However the privileged classes became jealous of the improvements made by the slaves in the field of education and so they began to oppose the activities of the missionaries.[39]

As a result of the progress of education among girls there was marked improvement in their mental make-up'. There was also a visible improvement in their general manners and habits. John Hands, a missionary who visted Nagercoil in December 1840, observed:

> I was deligted with the clean, neat, and orderly appearance and behaviour of the children; with the inte-

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[37] *Ibid.*, vol. XVI, (New Series, October. 1838), p. 512

[38] Mrs. Charles Mault to the Foreign Secretary, L. M. S., dated Nagercoi 2 June 1830. *Ibid.*, vol. VII, (New Series, July, 1830), pp, 540-41, The desire of the missionaries was to send the slave girls free after their education in the schools. To effect this, the slave girls were taught lace-making and a portion of their earnings was reserved by the missionaries to purchase their liberty. This measure of the missionaries secured the freedom of several slave girls.

[39] Mrs. Mault to a friend in St. Neots. *Ibid.*, vol. IX, (New series, January, 1831). p. 32

lligence they generally displayed; and especially the readiness and propriety with which most of them replied to questions on the scriptures and various religious subjects.[40]

The educated women evinced much interest in attending the church meetings Moreover, adult female Sabbath schools were opened for old women, who were taught to read the *Catechisms* and Bible passages.[41] The pioneering work of the missionaries in the field of female education considerably enhanced their status in society and opened the eyes of the government to the need of educating the women, irrespective of their caste and creed.

The credit for establishing vocation based education in Travancore also goes to the untiring efforts of the L M. S missionaries. In 1820, Charles Mead founded the School of Industry at Nagercoil for the purpose of promoting useful arts, instructing children of industrious parents and giving the means of subsistence and the advantages of a Christian education to orphans and redeemed slaves.[42] At first the trades taught were printing, book-binding and the art of tanning and currying leather. The success of the schools made the missionaries open similar schools at Neyyur and other places and in those schools different kinds of trade, such as the manufacture o fpaper, weaving,

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40 *M.M.C.*, vol. V, (October, 1841), p.155. Of the schools he had seen in India, the Bording School at Nagercoil was the largest and best conducted institution of its kind.

41 *L. M. S. Report*, 1887, p 159; Report of the Nagercoil Station from January to June 1829. *E. M M. C.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, July, 1830), p. 322. The result of the work was that at the end of 1908 there were 66 girls schools with 4743 students. *L. M. S. Report. 1909*, p. 346

42 *Ibid* , p, 84

rearing of silk worms, the manufacture of sugar and indigo were developed.[43] These industries were, ofcourse suited to the land and evoked an interest in industrial education in the people and the government. This led to the establishment of the "School of Arts" at Trivandrum in 1862.[44] The School of Industry was supported by the profits made by it.[45]

The most important achievement of Charles Mead in the field of education was the establishment of the Seminary or Central School at Nagercoil in 1818, the first institution to give regular English education in Travancore.[46] The main object of the Seminary was the 'communication of religious and useful knowledge'. A subsidiary object was to teach the language and literature of the people.[47] The languages taught were English, Malayalam, Tamil and Sanskrit. Instruction was in English except in theological and other informative lessons, which were taught in Tamil and Malayalam languages.[48] Early teachers for the Seminary were brought from Tranquebar and Tanjore and gradually natives were trained up. Only those students, who completed their studies in the schools connected with the Mission and showed signs of advancement in the religion, were admitted into the Seminary. Those students who manifested

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43 *T. S. M.*, vol. II, p. 484

44 *Ibid* p. 485

45 *L.M.S. Report, 1822*, p. 84

46 *T.S.M.*, vol. II. p. 446

47 *E.M.M.C.*, vol. XXX, (January, 1830), pp. 36-37

48 *District Committees in India*, (Nagercoil, 5 February, 1828). p. 7; Letter from Charles Mead and Charles Mault, dated Nagercoil, 31 January 1820. *E M.M.C* , vol. XXVIII, (August 1820), p. 155

suitable dispositions and qualifications for the ministerial office were placed under the charge of one of the missionaries so as to receive a special course of study in classical theology. The students were boarded and clothed at the expense of Mission. The students who successfully completed their studies in the Seminary were appointed as schoolmasters and local teachers to propagate the gospel.[49] The school made rapid strides in a few years. Digby Macworth, a cavalry officer, who visited the Seminary in 1821, gives the following testimony of its progress:

> I asked the senior boys a great number of questions on scripture doctrines and history ... I was quite astonished at their answers. Such a state of improvement is highly creditable to their instructors, and has been produced, they (missionaries) think, by the habit of passing much time in daily questioning them as to the meaning of all they read.[50]

The Nagercoil Seminary became the most important educational institution of the L. M. S in South India. George Trevor Spencer, the Lord Bishop of Madras, who visited Nagercoil in 1841, was impressed by the progress made by the students of the Nagercoil Seminary and he observed:

> I undertook their examination myself, and was not a little surprised to find that they were reading Homer, in the original. They read to me a few verses of the Iliad, and also of the Greek Testament, and their knowledge of the Greek language is really very respectable, and does great credit to their instructor. They also read to me in English a chapter of the Bible, which they translated readily, and I was told very accurately

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[49] *District Committees in India*, p. 7

[50] *A Cavalry Officer, op. cit.*, p. 67

> into Tamil. Every question that I proposed to them was most correctly answered. Deeply interested as I am in the progress of native education, I was delighted with all that I saw and heard; indeed I have seldom had such a great treat.[51]

Friendly intercourse between caste Hindus and others paved the way for the integration of communities. J. O. Whitehouse observed: "It is interesting to see how caste, customs, and rules, are laid aside, all from Brahmin to the Pariah sitting together without the slightest objection".[52]

An important change in respect of the working of the Seminary was introduced in 1862. Till then studies were carried on chiefly through the medium of the English language. In 1862 it was decided to discontinue English and substitute it by Tamil. "Many books in the Tamil language", James Duthie observed, "suitable as class books already exist, the number of which is increasing year by year; and it seems, therefore, on all accounts best that young men preparing for Mission work should pursue their studies in the vernacular of their countrymen, among whom they will be sent to labour after the term of study has expired".[53]

The institution however did not work up to the standards prescribed or accepted by the University, nor did it present its inmates to any public examinations. Both oral and written examinations were conducted by the English missionaries, who were appointed by the T. D. C. The lower classes were examined by the headmaster or senior teachers. Promotions were made and prizes awarded according to merit.[54] The growth of the institution afforded a good illustration of two separate points, the growth of English education in Travancore and the sure stride toward self-supporting Missions. It was the first institution in South India to teach English systematically.[55]

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[51] George Trevor Spencer, *Journal of a Visitation to the Provinces of Travancore and Tinnevelly in the Diocese of Madras, 1840-1841*, p. 107

[52] *E.M.M.C.*, vol. XXIII, (New Series. April, 1845), p. 216

[53] *L.M S. Report, 1863*. p. 34. For details about the different subjects taught in the Seminary, see *T.D.C. Report, 1865*, pp. 3-4

James Duthie, who was in charge of the institution from 1860 to 1908, obtained the sanction of the Directors of the L. M. S. to raise funds for a college in South Travancore. Some friends of the Society promised large sums of money, the chief among whom being Septimus Scott, one of the Directors.[56] In 1893 the Seminary was raised to the status of a college, affiliated to the University of Madras, and was named Scott Christian College.[57]

In the beginning the educational department of the Mission suffered much from lack of good teachers. To equip them with intellectual acumen and teaching technique, special classes were held in the Nagercoil Seminary.[58] Referring to the teachers, the deputation under Daniel Tyreman remarked:

> They appear to be much devoted to their work, and we had every reason to be satisfied with their qualifications

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[54] Histories Connected with the L.M.S., Review or the History of the Scott X'ian college, pp. 3-5

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 2

[56] AJ. Franklin, The fifty years of the Scott Christian College, *Platinum Jubilee Souvenir, 1967, Scott Christian College, Nagercoil.* pp. 1-4

[57] *L.M.S. Report, 1894*, p, 474

[58] *Ibid., 1865*, p. 35

> and their labours. . They are essential auxiliaries to this vast and extended Mission.[59]

The missionaries also gave training to the students belonging to the backward classes in order to make them school teachers among their own people.[60]

It is necessary here to examine the attitude of the Travancore Government toward the educational activities of the missionaries. The efforts made by the missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore in the case of education attracted the attention of the Travancore sovereign, Svathi Tirunal. He fully appreciated the advantages of English education when he visited the Nagercoil Seminary in 1834, and thought of placing the same within the reach of his subjects by introducing an educational system in Travancore. In the same year an English school was opened at Trivandrum and John Roberts, who was then the head of the Nagercoil Seminary, was invited to take charge of the institution. In 1836 it became the Government Free School and John Roberts was admitted into government service The establishment of the Free School was followed by the opening of several other schools for the dissemination of occidental knowledge.[61] But the lower classes were not permitted to attend the government schools and mix with the privileged classes till the last decade of the nineteenth century.[62] When there was pressure from the people to open schools for all castes, the government in 1865 proposed to establish separate Anglo-vernacular schools for "the children of the Shanars and of such castes as do not mix freely with the Sudras".[63] To the missionaries this was a destructive policy. They vigorously opposed the establishment of separate schools for unprivileged classes and requested the government to open cosmopolitan institutions.[64] "The benefits of the educational institutions of His Highness' Government", remarked Baylis, "should be shared by youths of all classes of His Highness' subjects: without reference to creed, or caste; and would assert that any system (of education) practically short of such principle, is defective".[65] This proposal of the missionaries did not receive sufficient and immediate attention from the government.

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[59] Extracts from a letter of Rev. Daniel Tyreman and George Bennett, the Deputation of the Society to the South Sea Islands, dated Mauritius, 7 December 1827. *E.M.M.C.*, vol. VII, (New Series, January,1829), p. 38

[60] L.M.S. Minute Book, 1889-1897, Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T.D.C., p. 276

[61] P. Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 415. In 1836 district schools were opened by the government at the instance of S. Roberts at Kottar. Thakkalay, Kayamkulam. and Chirayinkil. By 1870 the government inaugurated the system of 'proverthy' schools, which envisaged the opening of at least one school in every village in the state.

The financial crises faced by the L. M. S in 1866 had its worst effects in the educational sphere. This depression prompted the missionaries to suspend many schools. When the financial position became stringent, the missionaries requested the Government of Travancore for a grant-in-aid to enable the Mission to push more vigorously the work of primary education.[66] Accordingly, in 1875 the Travancore Government provided for a sum of Rs. 15,000

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[62] S. Mateer, "Hindu Caste and its Practical Operation". *I.E R.*, vol. I, (October, 1872), p. 228. The government spent large sums of money for education. But the entire amount was spent for the education of the higher castes.

[63] F. Baylis to T. Madhava Row, 26 September, 1865. Cover File, No. 135

[64] John Lowe to T. Madhava Row, dated Neyyur, 22 September 1865, Ibid.

[65] Frederick Baylis to T. Madhava Row, dated Kuzhitturai, 3 September 1871 Ibid.

[66] *I.E.R.*, vol. I, (January, 1874), p. 376.

to be given as grants-in-aid to schools not under direct government supervision. The grants were intended to aid elementary education in the vernacular schools. All needy institutions received some assistance from the government.[67] The aid primarily proved a great blessing to the missionary educational institutions in particular.

The policy of the government was to integrate the course of instruction in private schools with that pursued in government schools.[68] The establishment of government schools in large numbers improved the overall standard of instruction in the government schools which was very high compared to the schools under private agencies. The latter were also beyond the pale of government control. What was really needed to enhance the standards in the private schools, including the missionary schools, was the appointment of worthy teachers who had sufficient training. Similarly in respect of courses and text books much of standardization was also needed. The government grants were made available only to those schools that conformed to the norms prescribed by it.[69]

The year 1894 was a turning point in the history of education in Travancore. The government accepted the responsibility for giving education to all classes of people in the state. A new grant-in-aid code was introduced in 1894 to change the educational pattern of the state and the whole educational system was brought under one authority.[70] This measure of the government severely affected the educational work of the L. M. S missionaries in Travancore. The government gained the right to interfere in the working of the schools by the introduction of the new code. The missionaries found in the code the violation of their right to maintain schools and educate the people.[71] The missionaries wrote to the Travancore Government:

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[67] *Ibid.*, vol. III, (October, 1875), p. 262

[68] *T.S.M.*, vol. II, p. 445

[69] *Ibid.*, p. 479

[70] L. M. S. Minute Book, 1889–1897. Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D. C., p. 280

> We are quite willing to help in teaching the people of the country, and will gladly accept any grants you may give us, provided you will not interfere with our liberty to govern our schools as we wish and teach what books we please. We will satisfy as to the thoroughness of the secular instruction we impart, and you can test it by your own officers.[72]

The government laid the following conditions in the new code, which the missionaries were unwilling to accept. They were:

> That the text books employed are those which may, for the time being, be prescribed by Government.

> That any change in the staff will be notified to, and have the approval of, the inspecting officer.

> That it shall not be required as a condition of any pupil being admitted into, or allowed to continue as a pupil in, any aided school that he shall engage, or abstain from engaging, in any religious exercise or worship; or attend, or refrain from attending, any particular place or places of religious worship; or profess, or refrain from professing, belief in any particular religion or religious creed. Nor shall the manager or headmaster

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[71] *Ibid.*, p. 279; *T. S. M.*, vol. II, pp. 444, 458

[72] *H. F.*, vol. IV, (September, 1893), p. 597

> of any aided school insist upon the attendance at school of any pupil, whose parent or guardian may wish him to absent himself on account of any particular religious observance peculiar to the religious body or sect to which his parent or guardian may belong.[73]

These regulations prevented the missionaries from using Christian text books, and making their schools a medium for evangelical work. The code also disqualified a good number of teachers and insisted upon better school buildings, more school furniture, and a higher average attendance. The teachers were required to pass government examinations to qualify themselves as teachers. Grants were refused to those schools which had not satisfied the provisions of the code.[74] This led to the closure of a number of schools under the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S., and the missionaries were faced with a crisis in the educational field.[75] The L. M. S Report for 1897 says:

> The Vernacular schools have reached a serious crisis... With the new Code a high standard has been set up which may make it impossible for the schools to obtain grants without such an expenditure of money as neither the native Christians nor the Mission authorities are able to bear Some of the poorer schools have already been closed.[76]

The code obstructed the missionary system of education in Travancore, T. W. Bach, an L. M. S Missionary wrote:

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[73] *Ibid.*, p. 598

[74] *Report on the Administration of Travancore for the year 1072 M. E.* (1896 - 97), pp. 10 – 12; *L.M.S. Report, 1898*, p. 137

[75] *Ibid.*, *1897*, p. 147; *1899*, p. 136; *Report on the Administration of Travancore for the year 1080 M. E.* (1904 – 1905), pp. 59 - 69

[76] *L. M. S. Report, 1897*, p. 140

> This was a serious retrograde movement. Relying upon the promises of government, we spent a considerable sum of money in raising the rejected schools to the new standard, never dreaming that, when we had fulfilled our part of the contract, grants would be refused. But a blow has befallen us which is as crushing as it was unexpected.[77]

Religious teaching during school hours was strictly forbidden and the missionaries adapted themselves to the new situation by giving religious instruction before school hours, and establishing Sunday schools.[78] Christian students, who studied in the Mission schools, left them in large numbers to secure a higher standard of education in government schools.[79]

The difficulty was overcome gradually. The Mission decided to entrust the management of the schools in the hands of the local people - the missionaries serving as mere helpers.[80] Educational councils consisting of the best men from the churches were formed in every district of the Mission for the better management of the educational work. The missionary of the district became a member of the council and the treasurer of the funds. This council looked after the appointment and transfer of teachers, and all matters connected with education. A General Educational Council, whose duties were mostly of an advisory nature, was

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[77] *Ibid., 1898,* pp. 146 - 47

[78] *Ibid., 1907.* p. 130

[79] *Ibid., 1900,* p. 181

[80] L. M. S Minute Book, 1889-1897. Minutes of the Annual Meetings of the T. D.C., pp. 281-85

also established by the T. D. C.[81] The pastorates assumed the responsibility of financing their own schools. Several of the large congregations, which were not formed into pastorates, but which maintained their own evangelist or catechist, also undertook to pay their own school masters.[82]

Till the introduction of the code, the Hindu section of the 'neglected classes' or slave castes did not receive even the rudiments of education. The missionary schools provided facilities for the education of the converts from such classes. But religious scruples prevented many of them from joining such schools, and government and other private schools kept their doors shut against them on account of caste prejudice. The desire of the government to extend educational facilities to them took practical shape in the grant - in - aid code of 1894.[83] Thus, a certain amount of uniformity in the educational system of Travancore came into being with the grant - in - aid code.

In 1904 the Government of Travancore went a step further and declared that the "Government are fully alive to their responsibility in the matter of primary education, and their aim will be to see that no child in the state between the ages of five and ten, whatever his caste and station in life, is allowed to grow up without the benefits of education '.[84] As a first step toward the realization of this ideal, the government resolved to bear the entire cost of the primary education of backward classes. It was also decided to bear the entire cost of the schools for the poor and educationally backward classes.[85] The order regarding free education to the backward classes of Travancore elicited wide-spread approval all over India.[86]

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[81] *Ibid*

[82] *L. M. S. Report, 1904,* p. 201

[83] *T. S. M.,* vol. II, pp. 481 - 82

[84] *Travancore Government Gazette,* Tuesday, 16 August 1904, vol. VIII, Educational Department, p. 180

The credit for the establishment of a sound system of education in Travancore goes to the missionaries of the L. M. S. They were the pioneers of English education and the education of the poor. When they began their labours in Travancore, the government was least interested in educating the ignorant masses. When the government found that the missionary activities in the educational field were winning laurels, they were inspired to enter the academic arena.[87] Consequently they gradually evolved a new educational policy with a view to uniting the whole educational system of the state, and the missionary educational institutions were also brought under the control of the government. Thus the missionary educational institutions lost their separate identity. The result was that Travancore became the most literate state in India by the end of the nineteenth century.[88]

Besides causing the introduction of a good educational system in Travancore, the missionaries published a good number of tracts, periodicals and books to enlighten the

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[85] *Ibid.*, pp. 180 - 81. The castes included in the list of backward classes were, Pulayas, Parayas, Pallas, Kuravas, Paravas, Tandan, Marakkan, Mukkuva and Kanikkar. For the purposes of the code it was declared that caste shall remain unaffected by change of religion.

[86] *H. F.*, vol. XV, (October, 1904), p. 400

8 /. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 414 - 15

[88] In 1908, of the 3,448 schools in Travancore with 2, 06, 017 pupils under instruction, the L. M S schools numbered 399 with 17,502 students. *Report on the Administration of Travancore for the year 1084 M. E.* (1908 - 1909), p. 54; *L. M. S. Report.* 1909, p, 346

people. This was made possible by the establishment of printing presses at all the important Mission stations. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote:

> The advent and the use of the printing press gave a great stimulus to the development of the popular Indian languages ... the printing of books and news papers broke the hold of the classics and immediately prose literature in provincial languages began to develop. The early christian missionaries .... helped in this process greatly.[89]

This is true with regard to Travancore. The first printing press in Travancore was installed by Charles Mead at Nagercoil in 1820.[90] It played a key role in the general enlightenment. Tracts, periodicals and books, which were a distant dream, now became a reality to thousands. This mass education brought in its train the seeds of a new civic consciousness and created a fertile soil for the germination of mass movements. The impact of the press upon the people was tremendous in Travancore.[91]

With the advent of the press, the missionaries started two other institutions, the Religious Tract Society, which was founded at two centres, Nagercoil and Neyyur, to print and distribute tracts among the people, and the Bible Society, for the translation and printing of the scriptures.[92] They also published several periodicals which helped to enlighten the people. The first periodical published was the *Missionary Gleaner* of 1841. In its wake came *Desopakari* in 1861, started by the Christian Vernacular Education Society with a view to attracting cynical Hindus. In 1863 the *South Travancore Christian Messenger* was started at Nagercoil. Other important publications of the missionaries were, *The Children's Lamp, The Mission School.Magazine,* and *The Glad News* for children; *The Mathrubodhini* for women; *The Temperance Hearld,* and *The Vathiyar Vilakku* (Preacher's Magazine).[93]

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[89] Jawaharlal Nehru, *Discovery of India*, p. 266

[90] Letter from Mead. *E. M. M C.*, vol. XXIX. (March, 1821), p. 123. Charles Mead got the press from Tanjore, and the materials for the printing from Tranquebar. The work of printing was done by a man by name David Adiyappan, also brought from Tanjore. Following this, presses were started at Kottayam, Neyyur, and other places.

[91] M. J. Koshy, The History of the Growth of Legislature in Travancore and Cochin up to 1956, (Doctoral Thesis, Trivandrum, 1966), p, 31. He says, through press the ideas of democracy and freedom began to permeate among the members of the middle class and gradually among the masses.

The educational activities of the missionaries helped to a large extent the development of local languages like Malayalam and Tamil. M. A. Sherring says: "Nobody in the early stages of the development of Indian languages paid greater attention to the study of native languages than the missionaries".[94] For practical purposes the missionaries learnt the local languages and prepared grammars, which were lacking before their arrival. Through the influence of the missionaries a new class of writers sprang up, who produced excellent literature on Christian themed in classical style and popular forms.[95] The translation of Bible in Tamil and Malayalam proved for the first time that

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[92] C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore,* p. 757

[93] *L. M. S. Report. 1901,* p. 200

[94] M. A. Sherring, *The History of Protestant Missions in India,* p. 465

[95] The leading Christian writers in South Travancore in the nineteenth century were, Devavaram Biddulph, John Palmer, A. Vedakkan and C. Masillamani Details of their contributions are given in my book, *A People's Revolt in Travancore,* pp. 77 - 79

different types of literature could be expressed in prose. Similarly, in the schools run by the missionaries, they taught the students in prose form, while the existing local system of education was in *slokas* (poetry).[96] The contribution of the missionaries to the development of prose literature was great.[97]

The introduction of education by the missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore marked the beginning of many revolutionary changes. The missionaries opened the eyes of the depressed classes to their deplorable condition and the necessity to better themselves through education. In the schools run by the missionaries, students were admitted regardless of caste. They drew the attention of the government, through repeated representations, to the need of educating the depressed classes and got schools opened for them. The old and effete customs and traditions were broken down. The old concept of *dharma* by which backward classes were denied education was thus changed. Educational opportunities made the unprivileged classes rapidly advance in the social scale, and awakened in them a desire to live better.[98] This noble action of raising the low from the slough of degradation and debasement was unknown to the Travancore. As a result of the educational activities of the missionaries a perceptible advancement was effected in the moral and social condition of the backward classes that came under their influence.[99] English education also played an important role in spreading the gospel of democracy and self-government. It opened a new vista of political thought and practice in Travancore along with a realization of a new sense of individuality, dignity, and self-respect. On its heels came an urge for social freedom and equality.

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[96] T. K. Gopala Panikkar, *Malabar and its Folk,* p. 148

[97] The missionaries of all the three societies who laboured in Kerala, viz., L. M. S., Church Missionary Society and Basel Mission, gave valuable contributions to the growth of Malayalam language.

[98] V. Nagam Aiya, *Report on the Census of Travancore,* vol. I, pp. 437-38

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[99] *Ibid.*, pp. 471 - 72

CHAPTER VII

STRUGGLE FOR ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

Slavery in the most unmitigated form united with caste restrictions to form an effective barricade against the missionaries of the L. M. S. when they started their activities in Travancore A major portion of the population, mainly those castes below the Nadars and the Ezhavas, such as the Pulayas, the Parayas, the Kuravas, the Vedar, etc., were generally classed as slaves. The lowest among the slaves were the Pulayas, who formed the bulk of the total slave population.[1] They were born slaves. Every *zamindar*, prince, or Nair possessed a certain number of them just as they owned cows or buffaloes. Canter Visscher says: "Their masters have power to put them to death, without being called to account, or, if they please, to sell them; though this is not often done without some good reason."[2] The slaves in general were an abjet and unfortunate race, who by cruel laws and tyrannical customs were reduced to a wretched state. A very considerable number of the slaves belonged to the government; they were partly employed on government land and partly rented out to the ryots.[3] The murder of a slave was sacarcely considered a crime.[4] Several thousands of slaves were sold annually like cattle and sent out of the country.[5] n the beginning of the nineteenth century the slaves were in a forlorn condition and were regarded rather as beasts than as human beings. As the missionaries put it:

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[1] Samuel Mateer. *Native life in Travancore*. pp. 291 - 93

[2] Jacob Canter Visscher, *Letters from Malabar*, pp. 70 - 71

> The price of each of these on the average is not ten shillings,[6] and the yearly hire of one does not often

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[3] In the first half of the nineteenth century ownership of slaves came under three heads. The first was *janmam* or sale, where the full value was given and the right of ownership was entirely transferred to a new master, who from that time was bound to look after the slaves in the same manner as the former master. The second method was by *kanam* or mortgage. A master could mortgage his slave to another for *kanam*, a certain amount of money. The third form of ownership was letting them for *pattam* or rent. The annual hire rate was 8 *panams* for a man and 4 *panams* for a woman. Francis Buchanan, *A Journey from Madras through the Countries of Mysore, Canara and Malabar*, vol. II, pp. 370 - 71

[4] Ward and Conner, *Memoir of the Survey of the Travancore and Cochin States*, vol. I. pp. 160 - 61. Their masters could buy them or sell them, feed them or starve them, pet them or bully them, just as their own feelings or dispositions dictated. They could own no property themselves, and could obtain no redress in a court of law. Rev. Richard Collins, *Missionary Enterprise in the East*, p. 176

[5] Fra Paolino Da San Bartalomeo, *Voyage to the East Indies*, p, 153

[6] According to Samuel Mateer the price of a slave ranged between Rs. 8 and 18. In some places women fetched higher prices in relation to their capacity to breed slaves. An infant of 10 months was once sold in a court auction on 10 August, 1841, for about Rs. 1. 25 S. Mateer, "Pariah Caste in Travancore", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, vol XVI, pp. 180–96

> reach a shilling. All classes, and people of all religions, keep them; and they are not allowed to come near the other castes. When not required for work, being excluded from contact with other people, they are left to starve, dive for shell fish, or dig up roots for their subsistence.[7]

Some slaves came from the higher castes also. Imposing slavery was one form of punishment. The Raja enjoyed the right to sell into slavery persons of various castes who had committed any crime which made them liable to lose their social status. Those of the privileged classes who were convicted of caste offences of a serious nature were ostracized and condemned as slaves. A woman found guilty of adultery became the slave of the Raja. A Brahmin convicted of theft had also to go into bondage[8] Slaves in considerable number were recruited in the *pulappedi* season.[9]

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[7] *L. M. S. Report, 1839*. p, 63. The punishment inflicted upon the slaves for theft, absconding, and similar offences was very severe. They were even punished by impalement. Francis Day explains this cruel punishment in his book *The Land of the Permauls* An iron spike was thrust through the criminal's skin, in the lower part of the back where a cross - cut had been previously made for its insertion; then the point of the spike was guided by the executioners finger. so as to bring it out at the neck or shoulder, carefully avoiding injuring any large arteries or vital organs since that would afford the poor victim speedy relief. The lowest extremity of the spike was then made fast to a wooden post, which was raised perpendicularly, and fixed into the ground; and thus the culprit was supported, partly by the iron spike under his skin and partly by a small bench placed underneath his feet, and raised about ten inches from the ground. Tortured by thirst, but denied water, scorched by the sun but denied shade, devoured by insects but refused any means of keeping them away; his miserable existence terminated in a lingeringr death which in some instances was prolonged for three days. A showe of rain was hailed as the greatest blessing as it caused the wound to mortify, and bring about the long awaited end. Apart from the cruel punishments, those who lived up to old age, suffered very much and many of them died of starvation. p. 177

Ringeltaube, the first missionary of the L. M. S., saw these social evils as a part of the rigid social system of Travancore. He did not attempt any revolutionor changes lest there should be violent reaction. He requested his Christian friends to follow the customs and traditions of the state and to give up their plaintive attitude[10] His aim was to better their condition through the means of education which was producing a remarkable change in the social set-up.

The arrival of the missionary ladies, Mr. Mead and Mrs. Mault, in Travancore was a turning point in the social history of Travancore. They concentrated their attention on the slave classes, and work among them progressed rapidly. Several slave girls were admitted into their Boarding School at Nagercoil, started in 1820. Their idea was to secure

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[8] K. P. Padmanabha Menon, *History of Kerala*, vol. II, p. 273

[9] The custom was that during certain months of the year if a person belonging to a low caste like Pulaya touched or threw a stone or a stick at a woman of the higher caste, found alone after dusk, she would lose her caste and would have to accompany him, never to return. The woman had to follow him even if he shouted from the top of a palmyra tree or any other point nearby, 'kantey', 'kantey', meaning he had seen the woman. Details of this custom are given in my article "Pulappedi in Kerala", *Journal of Kerala Studies*, vol. II, Part I. (March, 1975), pp. 41-54

[10] James Hough, *History of Christianity in India*, vol. IV, p. 281

freedom for the slave scholars while they were in school by paying their cost and freeing them from bondage.[11] However, some masters refused to accept the money and let their slaves free. Mrs. Mault gives a touching incident of a girl, who was educated in the Boarding School and whose freedom she failed to secure. She says:

> A girl in the school had become big enough to work in her master's field, he therefore came to make his claim to her. I asked him if it would not be well for her to learn to read; and whether he should not allow her to do so? He replied, it may be well for you to instruct her, as you will get a better place in heaven thereby; but it is enough for me if my bullocks and slaves do the work required in the fields.[12]

Another instance of a poor slave girl will make the position clearer. A girl of about eleven years age was found near the premises of Mrs. Mault in a state of exhaustion due to hunger. She told the missionary that she was a slave and owing to her master's heartless flogging she had run away. She was given asylum by Mrs. Mault. After ten days, a morose looking man appeared and demanded his slave girl Every effort possible was made to induce him to show clemency by offering to accept the cost of her freedom. But this was in vain. In Mrs. Mault's words:

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[11] Letter from Mrs. Mault to the Foreign Secretary, dated Nagercoil, 2 June 1830. *E. M. M C.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, December, 1830), pp. 540-41. Mrs. Mault writes: "About one-third of the girls in our school are slaves and, as the children of slaves here are always the property of the mother's master, we have formed the resolution that each girl, by her own industry shall purchase her freedom before she leaves the school". *Ibid.*, vol. IX, (New Series, January, 1831), p. 32

[12] *Ibid*

> He was unmoved, his iron heart had no relentings. 'I want not your money, but my slave', said he, as he walked away with her.[13]

When the girl was seen following her master to his house, the school girls rushed out and with tears in their eyes entreated him to release her, but he was unmoved.[14] This incident left a deep mark on the missionaries who spared no occasion to work for their manumission.

As a first step in this direction they decided to build up a strong public opinion to attract the attention of the authorities. They wrote a series of articles describing the plight of the slaves. In 1841 John Abbs concluded one of his tracts about slaves in the following words:

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[13] Letter from Mrs. Mault to the Foreign Secretary, dated Nagercoil, 2 June 1830. *Ibid.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, December, 1830), p. 51

[14] *Ibid.* Rev. Cox had narrated another incident which shattered his mind. He says: "When I was preaching at Matilda Chapel in February last, a few low caste slaves came near and stood to listen. After service, I went out to them. I could only induce one to come near me; the other ran away to some distance, through fear. I talked to the former and told him that he was my brother, and I his, and invited him to come to the Chapel and hear the Gospel. I felt shame rising within me at the existence of such a state of things as required me to tell my fellow man that he was not unfit to come near me. This is one of the evils of caste - the fatal instrument of which Satan has so long employed to enslave and destroy the souls of millions in this part of the earth. The 'reader' also spoke to him, and told me afterwards, that some of the people murmured at him for so doing, for they said, 'If you speak to these slaves they will come among us, and we shall be defiled", *L. M. S. Report, 1842*, p. 67

> .... We cannot calculate how many of the sons of bondage are prematurely removed from this world in childhood and yonth for want of sufficient nourishment and clothing. Those who reach maturity are doomed to work like beasts of burden, to live in wretched hovels, to eat the most offensive animals and reptiles, and to be treated as outcaste by their fellow creatures.[15]

The missionaries advocated the cause of the slaves and called the attention of all free men to this peril. They roused the conscience of every free man by arguing that the slave "is entitled to the sympathy and aid of every free man; and whether we consider the horrible effects of slavery on its victims or on their oppressors, or the obstacles, it opposes, to the progress of civilization and religion in the world, we have the most powerful motives presented to us for promoting in every legitimate way its immediate and entire abolition."[16] Mrs. Mault, who was deeply interested in the abolition of slavery in Travancore, wrote in 1845:

> God has created all men equal, and endowed them with life that they might enjoy it, in subordination to his will; and liberty, that they might use it, for promoting the great ends of their existence as rational and accountable creatures.
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> As slavery violates a fundamental law of man's nature, so it expressly contravenes the revealed will of God. That will required that every man should love his neighbour as himself.[17]

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[15] Quoted by Samuel Mateer., *op. cit.*, p. 304

[16] *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXIII. (New Series. October, 1845), p. 679

[17] *Ibid.*, pp. 676 - 77

The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society also co-operated with the missionaries of the L. M. S in exposing the evils of slavery.[18]

The Act passed by the Government of India in 1843[19] abolishing slavery in British India was an inducement to the missionaries to push ahead with their offensive against the evil in Travancore. On 19 March, 1847, they presented a memorandum to the Raja, Uttram Tirunal Martanda Varma, proposing the entire and immediate emancipation of all slaves in Travancore. The chief ameliorative measures proposed were:

1. No traffic in slaves should be permitted.
2. Slavery should be made penal as in British India.
3. Slaves should be permitted to own property like other classes of people.
4. Hereditary slavery should be done away with.[20]

As a first step toward abolition of slavery the missionaries requested the Raja to effect the emancipation of government slaves. They reminded the Raja that such an act of mercy

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[18] The missionaries of the Church Missionary Society exposed the evils and outrages of slavery through the Church Missionary Records, a monthly publication mainly dealing with its South Indian Missions.

[19] It declared that no public officer should enforce decree or demand of rent or revenue by the sale of slaves, that slaves could acquire and possess property and were not to be dispossessed of such on the plea that they were slaves, and that acts considered penal offences to a free man should be applicable in the case of slaves also. General Cullen to the Dewan of Travancore, dated Cochin, 12 March 1849. Cover File No. 286

[20] Vide App. II

would make his "name precious in Travancore for generations to come as the reliever of the oppressed"[21] The Raja fully appreciated the feelings of the missionaries in regard to the emancipation of slaves. V. Venkita Row, the Dewan of Travancore, on behalf of the Raja wrote to the Resident on 1 June, 1847 on the question of slavery. He said: "... the amelioration of the condition of the unfortunate classes of the population is a subject which will not fail to engage His Highness' future consideration."[22] But the representation they made did not produce the desired effect on the government. Charles Mead observed:

> As these poor slaves are so ignorant and oppressed as to be quite unable to defend themselves, we felt it to be our duty to take up the cause, and make a representation to the British Resident, which has had the effect of restraining their enemies for a time; but, as usual, nothing is settled. You are already aware that the Missionaries in Travancore petitioned the Rajah, on his coming to the throne, to emancipate the slaves in his dominions, but without success.[23]

The Resident, General Culllen, took a very keen interest in the abolition of slavery. In a letter to the Dewan dated 12 March, 1849 he had drawn the attention of the Travancore Government to the Act passed by the Government of India in 1843. He urged the Dewan to improve the condition of slaves as far as it could be done without affecting the interests of their owners. He recommended measures to phase out the abolition of slavery, and as a first step suggested the manumission ofall government slaves.[24] He proposed;

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[21] Petition of the Christian Missionaries to the Raja of Travancore, 19 March 1847. Cover File No. 286

[22] V. Venkita Row to General Cullen, dated Trivandrum, 1 June 1847. Ibid

[23] *L. M. S. Report, 1848,* p. 89

1 that government should publicly disconnect itself with the perpetuation of slavery.

2 that government should take measures for the future emancipation of slaves by declaring that all children born of government slaves should be free, and that while the government should receive no slaves on their own account, they should exact a like stipulation as to the emancipation of all children of slaves whom the govermnent might restore to claimants as distant heirs along with their escheated estates.

3 that more stringent regulations should be established with regard to the treatment of slaves; they should be given food, clothing and better treatment on a tolerably good scale.[25]

Although the Raja was in favour of it, he found great difficulty in convincing the various landlords and landed proprietors of its reasonableness. On the contrary, the latter contended that the abolition of slavery would lead to the ruin of agriculture. Therefore, the Raja kept the matter in abeyance.[26] The continued delay in effecting the reform made the Resident impatient. He sent strongly worded

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[24] General Cullen to Krishna Row, dated Cochin, 12 March 1849. Cover File No. 286

[25] Ibid.; T. Pycroft, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St, George, to the Secretary to the Government of India, 9 March 1855. For. Pol. Proc., 5 to 20 April, vol. 1318, No. 32, pp. 42 - 44

[26] P, Shungoony Menon, *History of Travancore*, p. 477

letters to the Government of Travancore for the immediate introduction of the reform.[27]

The indecisive stance of the Raja was a matter of great anxiety to the Madras Government, for they wanted to see the immediate abolition of slavery in Travancore. M. C. Montgomery, the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government, expressed the anxiety of the Governor and the Court of Directors for not implementing the reform even after a delay of six years. He wrote to the Resident thus: "I am further desired to convey you, for communication to the Dewan, the opinion of this Government that the Rajah's answer on the subject should not after six years' delay be longer deferred, considering that the measure has already received the approval of the Government and of the Honourable the Court of Directors"[28] Indefinite procrastination of the reform tended to dishearten the missionaries also. Charles Mead writes:

> We are sorry that nothing has been done to ameliorate the condition of the slaves of the soil in Travancore. Thousands of the people are prevented by their cruel owners from attending Christian instruction. Amongst our fisher-people there are numerous slaves, who could be easily redeemed, if benevolent persons would contribute a little of their property for the purpose. We have redeemed several families of fishers and others, by private means, but a special fund is required for this object.... The slaves who work in the paddy field must be liberated by the influence of the government, for in many instances the state is the slave proprietor.[29]

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[27] General Cullen to Krishna Row, dated Courtalam, 2 August 1853, Cover File No. 286

[28] M. C. Montgomery to the Resident General Cullen, 14 September 1853 Ibid.

[29] *L. M. S. Report, 1850*, p. 72

Sustained efforts of the Resident and of the Madras Government made the Travancore Government ultimately agree to issue a proclamation in 1853 It declared free the future children of government slaves and made provision for the improvement of the condition of other slaves.[30] But the proclamation was ineffective because it sought to liberate only the children born of government slaves after 15 September, 1853, the date of proclamation.[31] It also had not liberated the slaves from the fetters of tradition, for it demanded the observance of caste rules including untouchability.[32]

Proclamation of 1853 hardly satisfied the British. The desire of the Court of Directors was that the Raja should be induced to extend the boon of freedom to all the slaves. Madras Government directed the Resident, General Cullen, to recommend the manumission, "not of the children only,

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[30] Vide App. III

[31] Proclamation of 1853. Cover File No. 286; T. Pycroft to the Secretary to the Government of India, 9 March 1855. Pol. Cons., 5 April 1855. Nos, 32 - 33. By this proclamation the liberated children were only about 6000 out of 1,36,000 slaves in Travancore. P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 477

[32] Neettu granting freedom to slaves. Neettu vol. 97, p. 131. Shungara Warrier, the Dewan of Cochin, expressed his dissatisfaction for the inclusion of a c ause respecting caste observances in the proclamation. In his letter to the Dewan of Travancore on 12 September, 1853, he observed: "In my opinion the 2nd clause of the proclamation respecting caste observances had better be omitted. The conferring of freedom on slaves cannot in any way affect their relative position towards persons of higher castes. Their objections in regard to caste observances will remain ofcourse the same as before. The Iloovans and several other castes are already free yet observe castes rules". Shungara Warrier to the Resident, 12 September 1853. Cover File No. 286

but of the Sirkar slaves themselves if the individuals would not thereby suffer from want of means of support, and desired that the subject of predial slavery in Travancore and Cochin should receive the serious attention of Government with a view to effecting early emancipation with the least possible injury to individual interests."[33]

Even after the proclamation of 1853, slave trade continued. So the Resident was directed by the Madras Government to confer personally with the Raja and ascertain from him, whether there was on his part any valid objection to the manumission of all the government slaves in his territory, both old and young.[34] As a result, the Travancore Government consented to the manumission of all the government slaves from the first day of the year 1030 M. E. (1854-55).[35] Then the Madras Government suggested to the governments of Travancore and Cochin to declare free the children of the slaves of private proprietors and of all slaves. But the Government of Travancore was against the immediate emancipation of the children of private slaves. They feared that the measure would cause economic malignancy as well as great anxiety and alarm among private proprietors regarding the motives of the government. However, they offered to place their slave proprietors exactly on the same footing as those in the Company's dominion, by the introduction of the Act passed in 1843 in their territories.[36] The Madras Government approved of this proposition and directed the immediate issue of necessary proclamations to that effect. Accordingly a proclamation was issued by the Raja of Travancore on 24 June, 1855 to better the condition of the slaves and concede to them, "advantages, which are enjoyed by the same class of subjects in the extensive territories of the Honourable East India Company"[37] It was a revolutionary social reform which challenged the conventions and practices of centuries.

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[33] T, Pycroft to the Secretary to the Government of India, 9 March 1855. For, Pol. Proc,, 5 to 20 April 1855, vol. 1318, pp. 43-44

[34] Ibid., pp. 43-44

[35] Ibid,, p. 44

[36] Madras Political Despatch to Court of Directors, 24 December 1855, Foreign Department, No, 22; For. Pol. Cons., 14 August 1855, No.12

To the missionaries of the L. M. S goes the honour of having taken the leading part in the liberation of slaves. It was their enthusiasm which later permeated into the Resident. After the abolition of slavery, the missionaries devised measures to educate slave children on a large scale and thereby to strike at the root of the evil. The schoolmasters, who offered to teach slave children, were paid in addition to their monthly pay one *panam* for every slave boy and one and a half *panam* for every slave girl. The result was that within a year more than 100 slave children were admitted to the schools attached to the Neyyur district alone.[38] Charles Mead took great delight in regularly visiting such schools and closely testing the improvements the slave children made in their lessons. An increase of pay was also ordered for all the catechists who brought as many slaves as they could.[39]

The emancipation conferred on the slaves several blessings. They got the right to acquire property. Several good houses were built by them. Applications were received from them for waste lands and the government responded to

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[37] Vide App. IV

[38] C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 892

[39] *Ibid*

their requests. Many of them were appointed in the government departments and coffee estates. They started engaging in petty trades such as, betel, tobacco salt etc., which were prohibited to them by custom.[40] Despite such spectacular improvements, several inequalities remained. The slave castes experienced difficulty in getting access to the public courts and offices. They were obstructed in the use of public highways and markets. The government was desirous of removing all the social disabilities of the slave classes. So the Dewan, Ramiengar, through a circular issued on 21 July, 1884 declared that the courts, offices, public highways and market places were for the use of all classes of people, without distinction of caste or creed.[41] The government also extended the benefits of education to these backward and downtrodden people. Special grants were given for the schools of the backward classes on the basis of the grant-in-aid code.[42] In 1904 the government decided to bear entire cost of the schools of the poor and educationally backward classes.[43]

The efforts of the missionaries and the measures adopted by the Travancore Government resulted in the disappearance of slavery. The slave classes gradually advanced up the ladder of culture. Caste Hindus noticed the changes in the lives of their erstwhile slaves and wondered at their progress. Nagam Aiyas says:

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[40] *I. E. R.*, vol. V, (April, 1879), p. 355; *Proceedings of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly of Travancore. 1905*, p. 37

[41] Vide App. IX

[42] *Travancore Gazette*, Supplement, 16 August 1904, No. 29, vol. VIII Educational Department, p. 176

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 181

> Driving about the town of Trivandrum one could easily see the sense of comfort and freedom which sits on the face of these low caste converts. I often wonder at the natural ease with which the Pulayas and Parayas, particularly the women among them, walk the Kings' highways and barter on the road sides, as if they had enjoyed the privilege unmolested from the time of Parasurama.[44]

Education completely transformed their lives and made them conscious of their rights and freedom. They were a changed people in the beginning of the twentieth century - a people with a new light in their eyes, and a new hope in their hearts.

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[44] *T, S. M.*, vol. II. pp. 481-82

CHAPTER VIII

A VIOLENT SOCIAL PROTEST

The most important social movement in Travancore in the early decades of the nineteenth century was the one for the right of backward class women to cover their bosoms and wear upper-clothes. Caste rules constituted the measuring scale that determined the mode of dressing of the people. For centuries, caste Hindus considered it an insult if a lower caste woman dared to appear before them covering her bosom.[1] Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller who visited Kerala in the thirteenth century, wrote: "They are all black, and go naked; all save a fine cloth worn about the middle."[2] The rigidity of this custom was such that the women of the Brahmin community alone enjoyed the prerogative of covering their bosoms when they went out, though they moved about in their houses with uncovered bosoms.[3] The women of the Nair community considered it indecent to cover their bosoms, though they used to put on upper-clothes when they went out. It was customary among the women of this community to expose their bosoms in the presence of members of the royal family or persons of high rank and also during religious processions as token of obeisance.[4] But the women of the unprivileged classes, namely, those below the Nairs, were forbidden to cover their bosoms. The style of dress prescribed to them consisted, "of a single cloth of coarse texture, to be worn alike by males and females no lower than the knee and no higher than the waist."[5]

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[1] Order No. 75, 27 January 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 6. Those who covered their bosom, contrary to custom, were punished very severely. The Rani of Attingal ordered the breasts of a lady, who appeared in her presence with her upper - part covered, to be cut off. (James Forbes, *Oriental Memoirs*, vol. II, p. 250). The maternal house of the Raja of Travancore was situated at Attingal.

[2] Sir Henry Yule (ed.). *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, vol. II, p. 376 In the fifth and sixth centuries women of all castes used to cover

The missionaries of the L. M. S., who worked among the backward classes of Travancore, not only effered the gospel, but also awakened in them a a feeling for social justice. In South Travancore the Mission-field was predominatly Nadar. A Nadar was "very exclusive in his feelings, looking with contempt on those below him, and with jealousy on those who are his social superiors".[6] Like others of the lower castes, the Nadar women were also forbidden to cover their breasts.

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their bosoms with a piece of cloth. (Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Keralam Anchum Arum Nuttantukalil*, (Malayalam), p. 217). Therefore this drastic change must have happened somewhere during the long interregnum.

[3] *T, S. M.*, vol. II, p. 252

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 351

[5] Vide App. VI

[6] John Abbs. *Twenty Two Years' Missionary Experience in Travancore*, pp. 151 - 52

But with the spread of Protestant Christianity under the leadership of Ringeltaube, Col. Munro issued an order in 1812 permitting "the women converted to Christianity to cover bosoms as obtains among Christians in other countries".[7] He directed the *sarvadhikaryakkars* to remove the obstacles that prohibited women converts from wearing clothes over their breasts and warned them of severe punishments if they acted contrary to this law.[8] But the *pidakaikkar* complained to Munro that as a result of this facility caste distinction was removed and everything was allowed to be polluted.[9] So Munro modified his order of 1812 and permitted the Christian women to wear jackets called coopayam[10] like the women of Christians, Shonagas, and

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[7] Translation of an order from Col. John Munro, Resident-Dewan, to the Sarvadhikaryakkars of Trivandrum and Neyyattinkara, dated Quilon, 19 Dhanu 988 M.E. (1812). C. M. Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, App. XVIII, p.1. The first step in this direction was taken by Mukilan, the Mughal Sardar, when he invaded South Travancore in the seventeenth century. He introduced several reforms for the good of the women who lived between Varkala and Vilavankode, a large portion of South Travancore coming under his sway. He was the first man to introduce reforms in the mode of dressing and break the established customs before the introduction of liberal reforms under the aegis of the missionaries. He ordered that women should cover their bodies when going out of doors. But his reforms fizzled out with his death, and the people returned to the old barbarous days. *T.S.M.*. vol. I. pp. 312-13,

[8] Col. John Munro to Trimughampidicha Pillai of Neyyattinkara taluk, 10 Vrichigam 989 M,E. (1813). C.M.Agur, *op cit.*, App XVIII, p. 1

[9] Circular Order from Col. John Munro, 7 Yadavam 989 M.E. (1814) *Ibid.*, p, liii

[10] There were three sorts of jackets in use in Travancore. The one used among the Muhammadans (Mappilas) and Malayalam women was called "Kuppayam", the body and sleeves of which were long and which was tied in front with a sitring or tape That used by the high caste wome

Moplas".11 A proclamation issued by the Dewan Shangara Narrainan, who succeeded Munro as Dewan, granted the Nadars, Ezhavas and such other castes who had embraced Christianity, the right to inherit property and their females the right to wear clothes over their bosoms 'agreeable to the Vedams of their religion".12 But they were not permitted to wear an upper cloth in the manner of the caste Hindus. "No women of Paravies, Shanars, and others of that description were ever to be allowed to wear clothes on their bosoms as the Nair women".13

The orders issued by Col.Munro were not strictly enforced by the local officers, who took very good care to perpetuate the old customs.14 When the missionary ladies Mrs. Mault and Mrs. Mead, arrived in Travancore, they did not like the Christian women to move about with their bosoms exposed like their Hindu neighbours. So they devised a plain loose jacket with short sleeves for female converts of the Mission, 15 which perhaps satisfied the modesty of the European ladies, but did not meet the social aspirations of the Christian Nadar women. The Nadar women of Tinnevelly enjoyed the right to wear the upper clothes freely and the women of Travancore would have nothing less.16 Thus in addition to the jacket, which was not worn by the Nair females, some of the Christian women, without the consent of the missionaries, had taken the liberty of wearing an additional cloth or scarf laid over the shoulder, called the upper-cloth, as worn by the women of the Nairs.17 These pretensions of the Nadar Christian women were resented by the caste Hindus, who interpreted it as an infringement on their peculiar and exclusive privilege. This dispute eventually led to a serious social protest.

In May 1822 the Nairs reacted against the Nadar women in Kalkulam and Iraniyal taluks. They were ill-treated for appearing in the market places with the upper part of the body covered. They were stripped of their jackets and upper-clothes. There were many instances of ill-treatment and outrage and consequent communal riots in the taluks. A complaint was also lodged against some of the Christian Nadars for not paying the arrears of their toddy rent and for their women wearing upper-cloth.18

Since the Nadar Christians could not go to the courts, Charles Mead, in whose districts the disturbances took place, complained of the outrages on their behalf to the Padmanabhapuram court.19 The court enquired of Charles Mead as to whether Christians were required by their religion

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was called *mudichi-ravakkay*, the body and sleeves of which were short and which was tied in front with a knot. That used by the Christian women was called *ravakkay*. The body was long and the sleeves were short. It was tied in front with a string or tape. E. Lewis to the Resident, dated Santapuram, 21 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 29-42

[11] Circular Order from Col. Munro, 7 Yadavam 989 M.E. C.M. Agur, *op.cit.*, App. XVIII, p. liii

[12] Proclamation by Dewan Shangara Narrainan. 7 Minam 990 M.E. (1815). *Ibid.*, p. xlvii

[13] Order o. 75, 27 January 1859 *Official Papers*, p. 6

[14] Col. Munro to Trimughampidicha Pillai of Neyyattinkara, 10 Vrichigam 989 M.E. (1813). C.M.Agur, *op,cit,*, App. XVIII, p. 1

[15] *L.C.*, p. 278

[16] E. Lewis to the Resident, Santapuram, 21 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, p. 42

[17] General Cullen to T. Pycroft, 13 January 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 5

[18] Neettu vol. 15, No. 29, pp. 30-32; Decree of the Court of Padmanabhapuram, Vakeel No. 177, 7 Vaikasi 998 M. E. (1823). C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, App. XVIII, pp. xlviii-xlix

[19] Padmanabhapuram was the southern capital of Travancore.

to wear an upper-cloth. Mead replied: "The Shanars, Parayas and such other caste women, as have embraced Christianity ought to wear an upper-cloth for the sake of decency when they go to the church, the fairs, markets and similar places and that they were instructed to do so and that it ought to be so ordered agreeable to Christianity".[20] The court decided in favour of the Christians. The Christian women took this decree as an official sanction to wear upper-cloth and continued to wear it, though they were hated more by the caste Hindus for doing this.

Charles Mead gained a great point in the decree, yet remained cautious in initiating radical changes. He advised the Christians to avoid giving unnecessary offence to the prejudices of the caste Hindus in any form whatsoever and to wear only the jackets rather than the upper-clothes. But the Nadar converts who had advanced in education and enterprise and improved economically were not willing to endure the injustice and oppression to which they were exposed by the caste Hindus. The women of the Nadars appeared always with the upper-clothes worn and the feelings of the caste Hindus against them rose high. The caste Hindus were also irritated by the complaints of the Christians to the missionaries against them.[21] The government felt that the Nadars of Nanchinad were not obeying their rules and regulations and were revolting against the existing customary services like *oozhiyam*.[22] Believing that the Nadars were using Christianity to raise their social status by wearing upper-clothes,

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[20] Decree of the Court of Padmanabhapuram, Vakeel No. 177, 7 Vaikasi, 998 M. E. (1823). C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, App. XVIII, pp xlvii – xlix

[21] Proclamation of 3 February 1829. Neettu vol. 20, No. 123, p. 48

[22] Oozhiyam - Exemption to Christians, Proclamation, 8 Kanni 997 M. E. Neettu vol. 15, No. 29, p. 30

and to evade taxation and corvee labour[23] the caste Hindus turned against the Mission. They determined to put a stop to the progress of Christianity and to the wearing of upper-clothes by Christian women by any means, and the revolt broke out for the second time in 1828, after a period of five years.[24] It was more intense in the Neyyur Mission district. Christian women were beaten, stripped of their jackets and upper-clothes, and several chapels were burnt down. On 23 December 1828, a large number of Nairs assembled at a place called Attur. They were armed with guns, swords, cleavers, rice-beaters and sticks, with the avowed purpose of seizing the Christians and taking them to Padmanabhapuram. It became a regular practice for them to gather together at the market places to assault the Nadar women. These disturbances went on for weeks. Troops were sent to suppress the rebellion under the command of Captain Daly.[25]

Dewan Venkita Row was advised by the Resident to hasten to the south and to travel through the affected areas in order to take steps for preserving peace and order. Accordingly the Dewan visited the places and held his court at Padmanabhapuram for conducting regular investigations.[26]

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[23] The Christians were exempted from corvee labour or oozhiyam, and services connected with the temples as a result of the representations of the missionaries. Ibid

[24] *L. C.*, p. 278

[25] Captain Daly - To suppress the revolt in South Travancore. Neettu vol. 20, No 258, p 94; Col. Morrison, Resident in Travancore, to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 23 November 1829. For. Pol. Cons., 23 July 1830, No. 18, pp. 15-22

[26] C. M. Agur, *op. cit*, p. 841. Ashton, a missionary, accompanied several women who came to meet the Dewan at Padmanabhapuram to present their complaints. They were shamefully beaten and their clothing publicly torn off. The sepoys did not allow the women even to past the gateway of the court with their bosoms covered.

After a few enquiries he recommended that the Christian women should place their clothes across the bosom instead of over the shoulders and advised all to live in peace and amity and maintain the ancient customs without change.[27]

A royal proclamation to maintain the old customs and usages of Travancore was issued on 3 February, 1829. It prevented the Nadar women from wearing clothes over their breasts. The proclamation said: "As it is not reasonable on the part of the Shanar women to wear clothes over their breasts, such custom being prohibited, they are required to abstain in future from covering the upper part of their body".[28] It made it clear that the decree of the Padmanabhapuram court of 1823 was not an order, but only a court decree. This decree was nullified by the proclamation. Also, the proclamation blamed the Christians for desiring to wear the upper-cloth "contrary to orders and ancient customs" and asked them to wear jackets or kuppayams, sanctioned by the proclamation of 1814.[29] It prohibited the erection of places of worship without the consent of the government and required the Christians to do *oozhiyam* services like other sections of the population. Lastly it directed the Christians to complain to the government instead of complaining to the missionaries[30] The proclamation was mainly directed against the missionaries and it materially affected the progress of Christianity. Charles Mead in a letter of June 1829 observed:

> Requiring permission in future for the erection of places of worship is interpreted to mean, that no more Christian

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[27] *Ibid*

[28] Proclamation of 3 February 1829. Neettu vol. 20, No. 123, pp. 48 - 50

[29] Ibid

[30] Ibid

> temples are to be built, and that those commenced are not to be finished .. Public worship is sometimes interrupted by the Sudras assembling to seize the Christians for Ooliam on the Sunday. Several schools have been deserted ...[31]

The period of the second revolt in 1828 was one of severe trial for the missionaries and Christians in South Travancore. Caste Hindus, who won the battle, had spread alarm and terror in every direction. Christians were considered by them as breakers of custom and tradition. So they tried to prevent all types of innovation by Christians. This created in the minds of the missionaries a grim picture of the future. They write:

> Here (in Travancore) the people must not deviate from ancient usage in the construction of their houses, - in the shape of their umbrella, - in the quality of their iron pen, and in a hundred similar matters: indeed it seems to be taken for granted that everything has arrived at perfection, for by the laws of the land no further improvement among the lower classes can be attempted.[32]

When Col. Morrison, the Resident, answered the queries of James Lushington, Private Secretary, Fort St. George in 1830, as to whether the Company's interference in the internal government and defence of Travancore should be terminated this issue was in his mind. He replied:

> If the inhabitants are deprived of our protection they would soon again feel the tyranny of their own government ... To withdraw then the British interference and

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[31] Quoted by C. M. Agur, *op. cit.*, pp. 845 - 46

[32] Report of the Nagercoil Station from January to June 1829. *E. M. M. C.*, vol. VIII, (New Series, July, 1830), p. 321

troops would be hailed with joy only by the officers of Revenue, Justice & Co., and by the interested individuals near the Rajah's person, but the measure would be felt by the mass of the people as the heaviest calamity.[33]

The proclamation of 3 February, 1829, eased the situation but it did in no way deter the Christian Nadar women from dressing in the manner of the women of the caste Hindus, as had become their custom.[34] They also began to wear coloured clothes and vests (ravikkays), like those worn by Brahmin and other privileged class women contrary to the principles of their creed and the long-standing customs of the state.[35] Encouraged by the example of the Christian Nadar women, the Hindus of the same caste in large numbers began to cover bosoms and wear upper-clothes. They moved about in the streets like the women of the caste Hindus with out the consent of the government.[36] To the government and the caste Hindus the missionaries were responsible for the increased use of upper-clothes. The missionaries denied it and brought to the notice of the government several other factors. The Nadars were advanced in education and thought of

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[33] For. Pol. Cons., 28 July 1830. No. 16. pp. 5 - 10: Morrison observed. "The affairs of the country for many years have been conducted, comparatively speaking, by new rules... If our interference ceases there would soon be such a mixture of the new and old as would lead to confusion, which might not have occurred if we had left matters as we found them on the death of the late Rajah in the year 1811 ..."

[34] E. Lewis to the Resident dated Santapuram, 21 January *1859*. Cove File No. *2115*, p. 41

[35] P. Shungoony Menon to Madhava Row, 3 January 1859. Ibid., p. 15

[36] Ibid

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social status. The rich Hindu Nadar families had been in the habit of wearing upper-clothes even before the introduction of Protestant Christianity in Travancore. Also, a good number of Nadars, both Christian and Hindu, were in the habit of visiting Tinnevelly to take wives and in search of employment, where the Nadars as a whole wore upper-clothes. When they returned to Travancore they refused to strip off their upper-clothes. Following their example, the same class living in the numerous and scattered villages began to wear upper-clothes "till at length it has become the rule and not the exception in those parts to wear it".[37] Both Christians and Hindus, who were affected by the sartorial restrictions, solicited the sympathy and support of the European missionaries.

The missionaries demanded full toleration and liberty for their converts without taking into consideration the time, the country and the nature of the government.[38] When persecution of Christians was rampant, some of the missionaries worked spiritedly to mollify the tyranny of the Travancore Government.[39] John Cox, the missionary of the Trivandrum

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[37] The Petition of the Missionaries of the L.M.S to the Maharaja of Travancore, 7 February 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 40

[38] P. Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, p. 504

[39] Between 1840 and 1850 several instances of persecution were reported to the Government. The details of the cases of persecution are given in the *Copies of Official Papers*, (pp. 19 - 35) and For. Pol. Cons, 28 December 1855 (Nos. 276 - 84, pp. 87 - 290). A few of them are given below: (a) A Christian convert Devasahayam with his wife and children were beaten and imprisoned. (b) At Neyyattinkara, Arulanandam, a catechist, was tortured by the Nairs for not doing *oozhiyam* on a Sunday. (c) At Nagercoil, Arumainayagam, a converted slave, was beaten and tortured by his masters, Madan Pillai and Chidambaram Pillai, for attending Christian worship.

Mission district, petitioned the Madras Government in regard to the outrages of slavery, torture and persecution of Chiristians in Travancore, and complained that the Dewan was in league with the government officials to oppress and insult the Christians.[40] He appealed to the Madras Government to annex Travancore to put a stop to the evils.[41]

The abolition of slavery in 1855 further aggravated the situation. It caused the landed proprietors much dissatisfaction and loss of dignity connected with their social status. General Cullen says:

> I believe this to have been one source, because the missionaries then also availed themselves of that partia emancipation to endeavour to make converts to Christianity and I know that it led to much excitement, for in travelling about in those districts at the period in question, I was frequently visited by large number of proprietors, complaining bitterly that they lost the services of their slaves on Sunday and that their slaves had in other respects proved very refractory.[42]

The landed proprietors wanted to restore their social superiority and domination over the lower orders.

To the caste Hindus the increased use of upper-clothes had become the symbol of unwelcome change in Travancore. They wanted to push back the awakened women of the unprivileged classes in to the ancient social dungeon, and compel them to adopt the old style of dress. They liked to see

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[40] *T. S. M., vol. I, pp. 513 - 15*

[41] *Official Papers,* pp. 14 - 16

[42] General Cullen to T. Pycroft. dated Trivandrum, 16 February 1859. *Ibid.*, p. 7

them moving through the streets with uncovered breasts. John Cox writes:

> None of the women connected with my Mission have ever worn the upper-cloth, or transgressed the Sirkar regulations concerning dress. But not withstanding this and every other precaution which has been taken to avoid offence, several assaults have been committed on individual Christian women and their jackets forcibly torn off.[43]

The caste Hindus and the Nadars, with their respective supporters assumed hostile positions againt each other. General Cullen informed the Chief Secretary to the Madras Government in January 1859:

> The Soodras (Nairs) are asserting that the Shanar women are constantly assuming the privilege of covering the upper part of the person, and thereby preventing a recognition of a caste, while the Shanars themselves simply complain of the prohibition as a hardship[44].

The general ill-feeling of the caste Hindus toward the Christians became more marked about October 1858. Several quarrels and disturbances took place between the parties in the markets and thoroughfares. Christian women were "troubled by the Sudras in the markets & co., for wearing only the jacket which is allowed by the proclamation, over the upper part of their bodies and several have had such jackets torn from them by force.[45] On 8 October, 1858, a Christian woman was assaulted in the public market at Neyyattinkara and her jacket torn.[46] In November, another woman was assaulted and her jacket was torn in the public market at Arunaur.[47] The outrages created a sense of insecurity in the minds of the Christian and Hindu Nadars. The caste Hindus declared that an order had been issued by the government to strip the women of their jackets.[48] The exaggerated reports of the Mutiny of 1858 developed the idea that the British power was in the wane.[49] With the proclamation of Queen Victoria, in November 1858, on the assumption of the Direct Government of India, the feelings of both the communities assumed new dimensions. The proclamation said:

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[43] John Cox to the Resident. dated Trivandrum, 21 January 1859 Cover File No. 2115, p. 16

[44] General Cullen to T. Pycroft, 13 January 1859. *Official Papers,* p. 5

[45] F. Baylis to General Cullen, 10 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, p. 51

> Firmly relying ourselves on the truth of Christianity and acknowledging with gratitude the solace of religion, we disclaim alike the right and desire to impose our convictions on any of our subjects. We declare it to be our royal will and pleasure that none be in any wise favoured, none molested or disquieted by reason of their religious faith or observance, but that all shall alike enjoy the equal and impartial protection of the Law; and we do strictly charge and enjoin all those who may be in authority under us that they abstain from all interference with the

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[46] This case was proved in the police court at Neyyattinkara, yet the offender was let off with a mere fine, which prompted him to commit several such crimes. *T. D. C. Report, 1858*, p. 7

[47] This crime was committed by a government servant, the superintendent of the salt store at Puvar. Arumanur is in the Neyyattinkara taluk, five miles south of the town. John Cox to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 21 January 1859. Cover File No, 2115, pp. 16 - 17

[48] *L. C.*, pp 298 - 99

[49] I. H. Hacker, *A Hundred Years in Travancore*, p. 48

> religious belief or worship of any of our subjects on pain of our highest displeasure.[50]

Reports were also circulated to the effect that Lord Harris, Governor of Madras, had given over the entire management of the kingdom of Travancore into the hands of the Raja and that consequently, “the Rajah would not tolerate Christianity in his territory, and that the Sudras and others would be unchecked in any opposition they might show to Christianity.”[51]

The proclamation resulted in serious skirmishes and violence. It was “universally interpreted by the natives as a declaration in favour of custom and caste, against proselytism in every shape. The purpose of it is supposed to be—Christianity for the Queen and English alone, Hindooism for the Hindoos.”[52] The Nadars thought that the proclamation had permitted them to infringe the existing rules, and the Nairs saw it as a sanction to take the law into their hands to repress, “what they took as an aggression into their caste domains”.[53] Some of the Nair officials joined hands with their caste brothers and instigated them to intimidate the Nadars, who violated the customs. In a petition to the Raja of Travancore, the missionaries alleged that the Nairs in their lawless proceedings were not only encouraged and abetted by some of the lower grades of government officials, "but that these officials themselves are the chief instigators and perpetrators" of the outrages committed against the Nadars.[54] To the missionaries, their object was "to destroy the Christian cause in Travancore, and restore society to that state in which it existed previous to the year 1809."[55]

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[50] Quoted by **Donald E.** Smith, *India as a Secular State*, pp. 71 - 72

[51] *L. C*, p. 297

[52] Robert Caldwell to Rev. Whitehouse, dated Nagercoil, 5 February 1859 Quoted by Robert L. Hardgrave, *Nadars of Tamilnadu*, pp. 64 - 65

[53] *T. S. M.*, vol. I, p. 526. “... ever since the reading of Her Majesty Queen Victoria’s proclamation, the Soodras have taken it into their heads that they are at liberty to do whatever they like with the lower classes... They have begun to close the bazaars, and will only sell to such persons as they please”. *T. D. C. Report, 1859*, p. 2

When the situation became tense, the Dewan, T. Madhava Row, paid a visit to the districts in December 1858. He observed the conflicting sentiments that prevailed between the Nadars and the caste Hindus. To prevent a collision between the two groups, the Dewan issued a proclamation on 27 December, 1858, as a precautionary measure, "requiring the Shanars to adhere to the usage hitherto observed by their women of not covering the body with an upper cloth like the Shoodra women; and the Shoodras to abstain from any proceedings on their own part that may lead to a breach of the peace, if the Shanars should ever be found to act contrary to usage, but to represent the circumstances to the authorities; with a view to prevent any collision between themselves (the Shoodras) and other high caste people on the one part and the Shanars on the other."[56] It warned the Nadars of severe punishment in case they violated established customs and practices.[57] To the authorities, the Christian Nadars were the main cause of all social

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[54] The Petition of the Missionaries of the L. M. S to the Maharaja of Travancore, 7 February 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 39

[55] *Ibid*

[56] P. Shungoony Menon to T. Madhava Row, 3 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, p. 14

"Conduct in violation of old usages is not proper, and is punishable This the Shanars should bear in mind, and shape their conduct accordingly. Should any Shanars conduct themselves irregularly, such

roblems. P. Shungoony Menon the officer-in-charge of the southern districts, observed: "When the disloyal conduct of Christian Shanars is properly dealt with, the Hindoo Shanars would behave themselves as they ought to do"[58]

The Christians and the missionaries considered the proclamation as a proof of the Dewan's "gross and unconcealed partiality."[59] This only served to add fuel to the fire. The Nadars, both Christian and Hindu, and the caste Hindus decided to fight for their cause in spite of the proclamation. The revolt which broke out in October, 1858, spread violently to all parts of South Travancore. From all over South Travancore assaults and riots were reported. From 25 December, 1858 onwards Christians were molested throughout Neyyur[60] and Parassala[61] Mission districts. In January 1859

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should be duly reported to the Sirkar. But Sudras and others should not themselves resist so as to cause any breach of the peace. Those that act otherwise will also be liable to punishment". Proclamation by the Dewan, 27 December 1858. Ibid., p. 19

[58] P. Shungoony Menon to T. Madhava Row, 3 January 1859. Ibid., pp. 15-16. He also requested the Dewan to republish the proclamation of 1829, "lest the Christian Shanars plead ignorance of the same and the Missionaries support them in such excuses".

[59] P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 509

[60] In the Neyyur district the revolt started with the inhuman behaviour of the police sergeant of Iraniyal. He and his caste Hindu followers beat many men and women and took a number of Nadars to prison. Acts of violence in Neyyur Mission district continued for many days, during the course of which three churches and one school were burnt down. (*L. C.*, pp. 300-301). The Dewan observed; "The panic it seems was great and men on both sides were said to have been severely ill-treated, and some wounded". T. Madhava Row to General Cullen, dated Trivandrum, 12 February 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 8

[61] An official came to the Kaliyikkavila market near Parassala and declared that he was empowered with the authority to insult and strip the

riots broke out in Trivandrum[62] and Santapuram.[63] Nagercoil witnessed the fanatic violence of the caste Hindus.[64] The most severe of the outbreaks after the proclamation of the Dewan on 27 December, 1858 was at Kottar.[65] In all these places women were assaulted not for wearing the upper-cloth, but for covering the upper part of the body.[66] The violence was not one-sided. The united front of the Christian and

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jackets and breast clothes of the Nadar women, Christian and Hindu and acted accordingly. His example was followed by others. In the struggle that followed six chapels were set on fire and destroyed. *L. C.*, p. 299; *T. D. C. Report, 1859*, pp, 2 - 4

[62] On 11 January, 1859, two women on their way to Aralummudu market near Neyyattinkara were assaulted by government peons. On 15 and 19 January, 1859, a mob of caste Hindus. numbering about 400 armed with bludgeons, daggers and knives, visited the markets of Arumanur, Puttankada, and Tirupuram, all in Neyyattinkara taluk, and assaulted the Christian Nadars. John Cox to Cullen, dated Trivandrum, 21 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 16 - 18; *T. D. C. Report 1859*, pp. 2 - 4

3 *Ibid.*, Santapuram District, p. 3

4 On 4 January. 1859 about 200 caste Hindus, armed with clubs and knives, entered the houses of Christians and attacked them. They stripped the jackets of women, tore their clothes and cruelly beat them. F. Baylis to the Resident. Cover File No. 2115, pp 44 - 48

5 A large mob of Nadars under the leadership of Chinna Nadan marched to Kottar and forcibly took away tobacco and money from rich merchants and attempted to pull down the shops of the caste Hindus. The panic-stricken merchants of Kottar closed their shops and halted the trade in the bazaar. P. Shungoouy Menon to the Dewan, 4 January 1859. Ibid., p. 17

6 F, Baylis to General Cullen, dated Neyyur, 10 January 1859. Ibid., p. 51

Hindu Nadars retaliated against the caste Hindu women,[67] Armed with weapons they attacked the caste Hindus in large numbers and committed much violence.[68]

When Shungoony Menon reported the Kottar riot to the Dewan and asked for troops to restore order there, immediate orders were given to send a detachment of the Nair Brigade to Nanchinad.[69] The police force was strengthened in the places where disturbances started. General Cullen the Resident, firmly stated:

> No attempts to effect by open force any change in the existing rules or usages can for a moment be permitted, and I hope the leaders in the late riotous proceedings may be apprehended and committed for trial.[70]

The presence of the military and police officials in Nanchinad spread alarm in the minds of the Nadars, who with renewed energy began to attack and resist the outrages committed by the caste Hindus.

When the revolt reached its peak point, the Nadars in all places displayed unprecedented vigour and enthusiasm. At Agasteesvaram, the stronghold of the Nadars in South Travancore, they collected together and decided to raise men and money. They proposed a combined and systematic resistance to the governmental authority and solicited the Nadars of Tinnevelly to help them in their great venture.

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[67] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, 12 February 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 8

[68] *T. D. C. Report 1859*, pp. 3 - 4. Details of the revolt are given in my book, *A People's Revolt in Travancore*, pp. 113 – 15/

[69] The Dewan to the Resident, 12 February 1859. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 9 - 10. The southern district of Travancore was known as Nanchinad.

[70] The Resident to the Dewan of Travancore, dated Trivandrum, 6 January 1859. Ibid., pp. 51 - 52

The Nadars of Tinnevelly gathered together with a view to enter Travancore to join their brothers and to plunder the villages of caste Hindus. The Resident averted the impending calamity by communicating the matter to the magistrate of Tinnevelly, who prevented the Nadars there from entering Travancore.[71] The combined move of the Nadars created havoc in the minds of the caste Hindus and the government. They determined to hush up the violent acts for the time being. The revolt lasted for five months.[72]

When the Madras Government came te know about this revolt an order was issued by them instructing General Cullen to be "careful to give no countenance to the idea that the British Government of which he is - the representative, recognises any exclusive distinctions, or the right of any set of men to prevent others from following in all matters of social or domestic life, such course as they may see fit provided it be not repugnant to public decency and morals".[73] The Resident was also reminded of his duty "to impress these views on His Highness the Rajah and to point out to him such prohibitions and those contained in the circular order of May 1814, or in the proclamation of 3rd February 1829 are unsuited to the present age, and unworthy of an enlightened prince."[74]

When the revolt became widespread, the Resident had suspicion about the proceedings of the Travancore Government.

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71 W. Cullen to the Dewan of Travancore, 10 February 1859. Ibid., p. 563; W. Cullen to T, Pycroft, 18 January 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 6

72 During the period of the revolt, nine chapels and three schools were destroyed by the caste Hindus. *L. C.*, p. 302

73 Order of T. Pycroft, No, 75, 27 January 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 6

74 Ibid

He received several letters from the missionaries complaining of the outrages committed by the caste Hindus and of the partiality of the government.[75] In a letter addressed to the Dewan, the Resident remarked.

> I do not see a single case of assault by either Shanars-Sudras, or Christians - nor the Chapel burning - notwithstanding the numerous cases that have occurred.[76]

"There must be something very defective", he feared, "in the police management", and hoped that the Dewan "be able to afford explanation upon the various specific charges of outrage made by the different Missionaries."[77]

The missionaries finding the situation hard presented a petition to the Raja on 7 February, 1859 describing the sufferings and hardships the Christians had experienced.[78] They received no satisfactory reply to their petition from the Travancore Government, and so the entire matter was presented to the Madras Government.[79] The missionaries prayed the Madras Government to cancel the Dewan's proclamation of 27 December, 1858, the circular order of May 1814, and the proclamation of 3 February, 1829.[80] The Madras Government

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75 Cover File No. 2115 contains several such letters, describing the severe ill - treatment of Christians and the irresponsibility of the government.

76 W. Cullen to the Dewan dated Trivandrum, 10 February 1859. Cover File No. 2115, p. 56

77 Ibid

78 The Petition of the Missionaries of the L. M. S., 7 February 1859. *Official Papers*, pp. 39-47

79 *L, C.*, p 304

80 P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 509

studied the whole matter and Lord Harris, the Governor, prepared a minute on his personal observations He concluded that the controversy was complicated by the fact that, "the differences of religious principles and caste habits are mixed up with social and pecuniary interests". The Shanars", the Governor observed, "on becoming Christians claim privileges, which partly if not entirely, free them from many of the duties which their state of serfdom, if not slavery, previously entailed upon them; and on these advantages accruing to the Christian converts, the heathen Shanars evidently aspire to the enjoyment of the same changes, though without conversion". On the other side, the Nairs "look with great jealousy on these changes, not only on account of their placing those whom they consider a degraded race, in a better social position, but also because they themselves become losers by the emancipation to some extent of their serfs or slaves from some of their duties".[81] At this time Sir Charles Trevelyan succeeded Lord Harris as Governor of Madras and the question was laid before him for decision. He and his Council members after inquiring into the whole matter found sufficient cause to interfere on behalf of the women of South Travancore. He came to the conclusion that the privilege of covering their bosoms decently had been denied to the females of the Nadar converts by the Travancore Government He wrote a strongly worded letter to the Resident on 6 May, 1859 in which he voiced his feelings against the continuance of the unjust custom in Travancore.

> The recent proceedings in reference to certain females of the Shanar class which have attracted so much attention, both in England and India, require no comment from me. I have seldom met with a case in which not only truth and justice but every feeling of our common humanity are so entirely on one side. The whole civilized world would cry shame upon us if we did not make a firm stand on such an occasion. If anything could make this line of conduct more incumbent on us it would be the extraordinary fact that persecution of a singularly personal and indelicate kind is attempted to be justified by Royal proclamation, the special object of which was to assure to Her Majesty's Indian subjects liberty of thought and action, so long as they did not interfere with the just rights of others. I should fail in respect to Her Majesty if I attempted to describe the feelings with which she must regard the use made against Her own sex of the promises of protection so graciously accorded by Her.[82]

The letter from Charles Trevelyan made General Cullen press the Raja to pass an Act in accordance with the views of the Governor. But the Raja and the government showed a strong disinclination to concede to the Nadar women the particular form of dress used by the caste Hindu women.[83] The Raja proposed to abolish all rules prohibiting Nadar women from covering their upper parts and to grant them perfect liberty to meet the requirements of decency any way they deem proper, with the restriction that they "do not imitate the same mode of dress that appertains to the higher castes".[84] The Dewan wrote to the Resident

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[81] Minute by the President, 28 February 1859. *Official Papers*, pp. 10-11

[82] Minute by the President, 7 May 1859. *Ibid.*, p. 43. Charles Trevelyan continued: "His Highness the Maharajah is sensible that the conduct of a portion of his subjects towards the Shanar women belong to an age of barbarism utterly unsuited to the present - advanced stage of civilization in this country".

[83] W. Cullen to T. Pycroft, dated Trivandrum, 12 May 1859. *Ibid.*, p. 44

[84] The Dewan to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 17 May 1859. Cover File No. 2115, p. 93

> His Highness would not have made even this small reservation, were it not for the fear, that the sudden and total abolition of all distinctions of dress whcih have from time immemorial distinguished one caste from another, may produce most undesirable impressions on the minds of the larger portion of his subjects and cause their serious discontent.[85]

The modifications suggested in the existing rules in regard to the dress of the women of Nadars was happily approved by the Resident[86] The concession was accepted by the Madras Government, "as a practical earnest on the part of the Raja of a desire to put an end to the barbarous and indecent restriction previously existing upon the dress of the Shanar women, but we cannot pronounce a final opinion until we see the working of the new regulation".[87] Accordingly a proclamation was issued on 26 July, 1859. It reads: "We here by proclaim that there is no objection to Shanar women either putting on a jacket, like the Christian women, or to Shanar women of all creeds dressing in coarse

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[85] Ibid. The Dewan continued: "...the progress of education among the people in general may be expected to have the way for much greater changes. His Highness hopes that the arrangement now proposed, the only one which seems calculated to answer the object in view; without the probability of disturbing the peace of the country, would meet with your approval and that of the Madras Government".

[86] The Resident informed the Dewan: "The modifications you have suggested in the existing rules in regard to dress for the Shanar females, and which you state have also received approval of His Highness the Raja, appear to me to be quite satisfactory, and fully to meet the views of the Madras Government". The Resident to the Dewan dated Trivandrum, 21 May 1859. Ibid., p. 97

[87] Minute by the President, 30 May 1859. *Official Papers*, p. 43

cloth or to their covering their bosoms in any manner whatever; but not like women of high caste".[88]

The proclamation failed to satisfy the aspirations and desires of the unprivileged classes. They wanted full liberty to follow their own inclinations and tastes in matters of dress, personal adornment and comfort, as in Tinnevelly and other parts of British India The proclamation had not effected any remarkable change in the dress of women. So the dissatisfied missionaries, before the Raja issuing the proclamation, submitted a memorandum to the Governor of Madras, Sir C. E. Trevelyan, denouncing the reservations in the proclamation.[89] They requested the Governor to exert the influence of the British Government, to induce the Raja to issue a proclamation giving permission to women of whatever caste to cover their persons in such manner as they please. To them, the proclamation was both deficient and objectionable because the privilege was confined only to the women of Nadar community. The women of the Ezhavas, the Parayas and other castes were subject to the same indecent restrictions as before, which the missionaries observed, could not but lead to serious disturbances and complications in the future. They requested the Governor-in-Council, "to take the affairs of Travancore into serious consideration, and in order to carry out the needful refoims, to institute a strict inquiry or adopt such measures as may be deemed most suitable."[90] Trevelyan directed the new Resident F.N. Maltby to adopt a decisive course to remove the existing restrictions on the dress of the females of Travancore. He wrote:

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[88] Proclamations from 1858 - 1874 A. D., No. 252, p. 27

[89] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S., 18 July 1859. *Pol Proc., 1859*, vol. III, pp. 130 - 32

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 132

> Nothing short of an entire removal of all restrictions, leaving the females to dress as they think fit will satisfy the government both here and at home; and that even if the use of the cold steel is necessary, this will be afforded.[91]

When F. N. Maltby, represented the matter to the Raja, he expressed his desire to abolish all rules relating to the dress of females.[92]

Although certain reservations were included in the proclamation of 1859, it did not deter the Nadar women from using the upper-clothes like the Nair women. They moved about in the streets and markets covering their bosoms with jackets and upper-clothes. Influenced by their action Ezhavas and others also started covering their bosoms. The result was that a proclamation was issued in 1865 by the Raja permitting the women of Ezhavas and all other castes to cover the upper parts of their body.[93] A proclamation directing Nair women not to make bare their bosoms in the presence of persons in high office and serving in temple or palace, as a mark of respect, was also issued.[94] As a result of those proclamations all classes of people began to move through the streets properly attired.

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[91] Sir. C. Wood, Secretary of State for India, to His Excellency the Governor-in-Council, Fort St. George, dated London, 24 July 1860, *Ibid.*, *28 August 1860*, No. 82

[92] F. N. Maltby to T. Pycroft, 15 February 1860. *Ibid., March 1860.*, pp. 176 - 80

[93] Proclamation of 19 Mithunam 1040 M. E. (1865). Neettu vol. 71, pp. 210 - 11

[94] *L. C.*, p. 62

The success of the revolt under the leadership of the missionaries produced remarkable results. It brought within the reach of the Mission the orthodox Hindu Nadars, and their children in large numbers began to attend the missionary schools. Also, it formed the basis of the radical changes that took place in the last decades of the nineteenth and early decades of the twentieth centuries. The event is a significant chapter in the social history of Kerala because it marked the beginning of a series of protests and remonstrances by the backward communities for equality before the law. The echoes of this loud outburst of suppressed civic consciousness are heard later in the Malayali Memorial,[95] Ezhava Memorial,[96] Vaikkam Satyagraha,[97] and similar other socio-political movements.

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[95] 'Malayali Memorial' or 'Travancore Memorial' (1891), was signed by more than ten thousand non - Brahmin subjects of the Raja of Travancore, belonging to all castes and creeds. It charged the administration with following a pernicious policy of denying admission to able and educated Malayalis to various offices and of promoting slyly the interests of foreigners. This memorial was followed by an inconsequential Counter Memorial (1891) submitted by the Brahmins and their supporters. As the Malayali Memorialists questioned the very basis of their enjoyment of special rights in Travancore, the Brahmins in the Counter Memorial tried to refute the arguments and allegations of their antagonists.

[96] On 13 May, 1895, Dr. P. Palpu, an Assistant Surgeon, belonging to the Ezhava community, submitted the Ezhava Memorial to the Dewan of Travancore. In this memorandum Dr. Palpu ably presented the various grievances of his community. He was critical of the attitude pursued by the authorities and expected a change in the outlook of the government

[97] Vaikkam Satyagraha (1924 – 25) was organized by the Indian National Congress under the guidance of Mahatma Gandhi for securing the right of the lower orders of Hindu society to use the roads round the famous Vaikkam temple in Travancore.

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CHAPTER IX

FIGHT AGAINST CIVIL DISABILITIES

The converts to Christianity were mainly drawn from amongst the unprivileged classes, who suffered much at the hands of the upper classes. To the privileged caste Hindus all castes and classes below them were slaves, and their status was to all intents and purposes, very much the same as of the slaves. These socially depraved classes were to perform gratuitous services of various kinds, guard government properties in several places, and work in government forests. They had to carry government goods from one place to another and transport salt from the pans to the places of export. They were not allowed to keep milch - cows and use oil - mills. Trade was out of bounds for them and they were even debarred from using finer clothes. Tiled houses could be owned by them only in their dreams; and shoes, ornaments of gold or umbrellas, were luxuries they could not covet. They were not allowed to decorate their huts on marriage occasions, acquire landed property, use wheeled carriages, public courts and public roads.[1] Schools and government offices were the sole preserve of the privileged sections.[2]

In the early years of the Travancore Mission of the L.M.S., when Colonel Munro was Resident, the converts to Christianity from the backward classes were granted some privileges, and they enjoyed a measure of freedom. They were exempted from *oozhiyam* services connected with temples and the government on Sundays and from paying a number of oppressive taxes.[3] However, they were not fully liberated from the shackles of feudal laws. The privileged classes continued to claim unrighteous demands. The proclamation of the Rani on 3 February, 1829[4] was the first severe blow inflicted on the humanitarian activities of the missionaries and their converts, after the establishment of the first Protestant church at Mailadi. The proclamation meant they converts should not infringe the ancient customs, and they should not on the ground of their conversion behave toward the privileged classes in a different manner from what they were accustomed to do before their conversion.[5] The situation became worse with the issue of the edict of 1851 by Dewan Krishna Row which deprived the backward class converts of the privileges enjoyed by them as Christians.[6]

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[1] G. A. Ballard to the Acting Chief Secretary to Government, Fort st.George dated Cochin, 9 March 1870. *Pol. Proc., 23 April 1870*, No, 23, pp. 2-4

[2] Vide App. IX

[3] Proclamation of 4 Kanni 997 M.E. Neettu vol. 15, No. 29, p. 30; Proclamation by the Rani, 1 Kartigay 990 M.E. Agur. *Church History of Travancore*, App. XVIII, pp. liv – lvi

[4] Vide App. I

[5] Christian Converts - Their Treatment in Travancore, Cover File No. 215 p. 22

[6] Ibid. pp, 3-5

The edict prohibited the converts from using the roads used by the caste Hindus and required them to make use of the roads and ways assigned for the low castes.[7] The edict declared that an Ezhava who became a Christian "must never cease to be an Illowan". Therefore the government must "not allow.... converts to the Christian religion to pass through the public highway by the temple but must compel them to go round thro' the fields".[8] To the Dewan, the privileges claimed by the Christian converts were perfect innovations.[9]

The missionaries brought before the Government of Madras the disabilities from which the unprivileged classes suffered. They considered the influence of Nairs as a bar to the progress of the lower sections of society.[10] The unprivileged classes were precluded from holding any office whatsoever by the laws of Travancore. The missionaries wrote:

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[7] Ibid., pp. 6 - 7

[8] Ibid., pp. 41 - 42. In 1887 J. C. Hannyngton, the Resident of Travancore, in regard to the granting of complete freedom to use all roads to the Christian converts, writes: "The Hindus ... do not consider that the fact of conversion to Christianity removes from the convert that property of causing pollution which attached more or less strongly to him prior to his conversion. They meet A, a Pulayan, on Monday. when his approach within fifty yards conveys pollution; they meet the same man as a Christian convert on Tuesday under the name of B, and do not believe that the Christian ceremony has entirely removed the polluting power". J. C Hannyngton to Chief Secretary to Government. dated Trivandrum, 24 November 1887. G O. No. 925, 8 December 1887, Government of Madras, Political Department

[9] Christian Converts - Their Treatment in Travancore, Cover File No. 215, pp. 188 - 89

[10] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore to Sir. C. E. Trevelyan, 18 July 1859. *Pol. Proc., 1859*. vol. III, p. 128

> They are not only inadmissible to Government employ, even as common peons, while Mohammedans are admitted, but they are excluded from approach to the places of justice, and from some of the public highroads, and obliged to use such terms of address and speech as they used when in their heathen condition.[11]

The antiquated customs and rules were maintained by the privileged classes, mainly the Nairs, to degrade and oppress those under them. Differences existed in the mode of wearing the cloth and of dressing by the people, the wearing of sandals, the carrying of umbrellas, the mode of address, the terms used, the manner of carrying a pot of water, the kinds of jewels allowed, the customs at marriages, the style of the houses, all such things, entering as they do into the every day life of the people. "And these, one and all", the missionaries write in their memorandum, "are obstacles to the mental and social improvement of the people, and to the prosperity of the country".[12] They requested the Madras Government to intercede on their behalf as per article nine of the treaty of 1805.[13] Though it did not bear immediate fruit, it made the Madras Government view with concern the seeming indifference of the Travancore Government to the question of civic freedom.

The assault on Rev. William Lee, a missionary of the L.M.S. in Travancore, on 16 August, 1868 at Punjalingapuram,[14] made the missionaries launch another fight for the removal of

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[11] *Ibid.*, p. 130

[12] *Ibid*

[13] For article 9 of the treaty, see Chapter I

[14] Punjalingapuram is a village near Agasteesvaram, at present in the Cape Comorin district of Tamilnad.

the disabilities.[15] The missionaries thought that their right to use roads and streets was wantonly violated by local people and hence represented the matter before the Government of Travancore. But it did not produce the desired effect.[16] The punishment given to the offenders by the Travancore Government was in the eyes of the missionaries "insufficient for the ends of justice.[17] So the whole question was laid by them before the Governor of Madras. The Madras Government, after reviewing the whole case, drew the attention of the Raja to the principle laid down that "the public streets of all towns are the property, not of any particular caste, but of the whole community, and that every man, be his caste or religion what it may, has a right to the full use of them, provided that he does not obstruct or molest others in the use of them".[18] The Resident of Travancore was advised by the Madras Government to "strongly urge upon His Highness the adoption for the future of this principle as that which is alone worthy of an enlightened Government".[19] What is more important to an objective enquirer is the later development or the by-product of this isolated event. An enquiry was soon instituted to investigate the extent and nature of disabilities suffered by the downtrodden in Travancore.

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[15] William Lee, who was passing through a road in Punjalingapuram, a village of Brahmins, was assaulted by them for his having used it. The Travancore Government, on the basis of a complaint from W. Lee, fined the offenders Rs. 30 each. To the missionaries the punishment was insufficient to serve the ends of justice and therefore approached the Madras Government for a just decision. This made the Government of Travancore remove many disabilities from which the unprivileged classes suffered. Order by R. S. Ellis, Chief Secretary to Government. 11 September 1869. *Pol. Proc., 1869,* vol, III, pp. 451 - 52; Newill to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Trivandrum. 22 December 1868. *Ibid.*, pp. 433 - 34

[16] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum. 24 November 1868. *Ibid.*, p. 441

[17] *L. C.*, pp. 33 - 34

[18] Order by R. S. Ellis, Chief Secretary to Government, 11 September 1869. *Pol. Proc., 1869,* vol. III, p. 453

As a first step the Madras Government instructed the Resident to furnish information regarding the disabilities to which the lowest castes in Travancore were subjected. Accordingly, the Resident required the Dewan to furnish "full and specific information as to whether the lowest castes in Travancore were still subject to any, and what substantial disabilities and oppressions."[20] In his reply the Dewan gave a list of the disabilities. They were the following:

1 They were not permitted to use roads open to the public of higher castes.

2 They were not permitted to enter and approach within a certain distance of many courts and public offices.[21]

3 They were excluded from government schools.

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[19] *Ibid*

[20] G. A. Ballard to the Acting Chief Secretary to Madras Government dated Cochin, 9 March 1870. *Ibid., 23 April 1870,* No. 23, p. 1

[21] G. A. Ballard in his report to the Madras Government gives the following picture of the relationship of a low-caste man with courts: "If the evidence of a low caste man has to be taken by a Judge or Magistrate, and the witness cannot come to the court, the court must go to the witness. But it must not go too near him, and the frequent result is that the witness' evidence is taken by the court or a Goomastah deputed for the purpose, calling the question to an intermediate peon and the peon shouting them to the witness and repeating his replies to the presiding officer, the distance at which the witness is obliged to keep from that functionary being too great to allow of the question and replies being distinctly audible or intelligible". *Idid.,* p. 3

4 They were excluded from the public service.[22]

Nevertheless, he noted that, all other major disabilities that proved a hardship to the lower classes were removed by notifications or had ceased to operate as a result of neglect.[23]

The Madras Government was for the immediate removal of 'all impediments' facing the lower classes, including pollution or *theendal*,[24] the root cause of all the disabilities.[25] With respect to the prohibition on the use of public roads they insisted that the Travancore Government should take due cognizance of what prevailed in the territories under the direct authority of the British in India.[26] The Madras Government also requested the Travancore Government to remove "all impediments to the free access by all classes to the Courts of justice and to the public offices of the State."[27] As a positive step toward the removal of pollution they opined that, ' public servants in their public capacity must lay aside all consideration of "theendal" or pollution by approach and contact of low castes, and be required to permit approach of all classes without distinction for the due performance of business during prescribed business hours, or when the exigency of the public service demands it".[28]

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[22] *Ibid*

[23] *Ibid*

[24] "All the disabilities" the Resident observes, "are based on one and the same primary idea, that of 'thindal' or pollution to the higher caste, or holy place, or pure object, by the contact or approach within certain distance, of the lower caste". *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3

[25] Order, dated 23 April 1870 *Ibid.*, No. 24, p. 8

[26] The principle adopted by the British Government in India with respect to the use of roads was that "the public high streets, of all towns are the property, not of any particular caste, but of the whole community, and that every man, be his caste or religion what it may, has a right to the full use of them, provided that he did not obstruct or molest others in the use of them and must be supported in the exercise of that right". T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 29 January 1870. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8

[27] Order, dated 23 April 1870. *Ibid*, No. 23, p. 8

The Travancore Government fully appreciated the views of the Madras Government and notified its determination to introduce or advace right principles of public policy "steadily yet discreetly".[29] Accordingly, in April 1870, roads, markets and courts were opened to all classes of people in Travancore, irrespective of caste and creed.[30] The Madras Government while approving the gesture, reminded them that, "a beginning only has been made and much still remains."[31] The Travancore Government did not follow up the action and consequently the reform did not bring much relief. It remained very much on paper. Very often, government officials who frowned at these reforms obstructed the lower castes at every step and thus defeated the very purpose of the reform. Continued entreaty by the missionaries compelled the hands of the Travancore Government to issue a general circular to direct "all concerned that the Courts and Cutcherries of the State and all public roads and market places are open alike to all classes of His Highness' subjects without distinction of creed or castes, and that no man shall be allowed to

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28 *Ibid*

29 T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 29 January 1870. *Ibid.*, pp, 7-8

30 Acting Resident in Travancore and Cochin to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Trivandrum, 20 April 1870. *Ibid.*, *9 May 1870,* No. 7; Circular of V. Ramiengar, Dewan of Travancore, dated Trivandrum, 21 July 1884. *Official Papers,* pp. 45-46

31 Order, dated 23 April 1870. *Pol. Proc., 9 May 1870.* No. 24, p. 8

hinder another from the free use of them on any ground whatsoever, such hindrance being an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the subject and calculated to defeat the impartial administration of justice".[32] The public officer "who may be found to deny free access to himself, on business, to any section of the population and who may not personally receive or hear petitions from any person or conduct investigations into cases in the presence and within the hearing of the parties concerned. on the ground that such person are of low caste", was warned with having to bear the "severest displeasure of government".[33]

Even after the circular of 21 July 1884, disabilities in the use of public roads by lower castes continued. Nadars, Parayas, Christians, Europeans etc., were prohibited from using public roads at times when religious processions were taken out.[34] The Christians wanted the privilege of total freedom from the stigma of caste and complete abolition of all religious prejudices which were so strong in Travancore. Several petitions were addressed by the Christians of

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32 Circular of V. Ramiengar, Dewan of Travancore, dated Trivandrum, 21 July 1884. *Official Papers,* pp. 45-46

33 *Ibid*

34 The Petition of P.C. Joseph and other Christians of South Travancore to T. Rama Row, 7 March 1892. Pollution of the dol of the Suchindram Temple by Messrs. Jacob and Hossely in February 1891 - Tirukalyan Ceremony, Cover File No. 1622. In their petition to the Dewan T. Rama Row on 7 March 1892, the Christians said: "The prohibition made by the Magistrate about the use of the public road is wholly improper and unjust as it deprives the petitioners of a public right to which they are for every moment entitled and the magistrate ought to have moved for a separate private road for his religious purpose rather than prohibiting a public road to the public".

Travancore to the Madras Government on this matter.[35] However, they were of the view that the Travancore Government had gone to its utmost extent in this direction.[36]

The children belonging to the unprivileged classes were not admitted to government schools The missionaries stood for the education of all classes of people in the state, irrespective of caste and creed. The representations of the missionaries to effect the same made the Travancore Government open their eyes toward the education of backward classes and propose separate schools for them. [37] But the missionaries opposed the measure on the ground that schools which did not allow the unprivileged classes to mix freely with the privileged classes would prove a failure[38] They requested the Raja to "cause all schools supported at the public expense to be opened to all cleanly, decently dressed and well behaved children".[39] The government ostensibly favoured the views of the missionaries. But the distinctions of caste and the strong feelings generated by this in Travancore presented a grave difficulty. The caste Hindu student was forbidden by his religion from associating with the outcaste students. The government feared that the

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[35] *G O.* No. 925, 8 December 1887, Government of Madras, Political Department; Roads and High Streets Accessible to All Classes - Petitions from South Travancore Christians – 1887, Cover File No. 3679

[36] Letter to the Secretary of State for India. 26 June 1891. *Pol. Proc., June 1891*, pp. 33 - 34

[37] Letter to the Superintendent of District Schools, 11 September 1865, Shanars - Admission – in Schools, Cover File No. 135; *I. E. R.*, vol. I, (July, 1873), p. 120

[38] John Lowe to T. Madhava Row, dated Neyyur, 22 September 1865, Shanars - Admission of - in Schools, Cover File No. 135

[39] *I. E. R.*, vol. I, (January, 1874), p. 376

grant of permission to all castes to attend the schools would prompt the caste Hindu students to desert them. So in this matter the Resident was for soft pedaling in order to achieve the aim without creating discontent.[40] Provision was made for the education of the children of the backward classes by the government in the grant-in-aid code of 1894. The desire of the government to extend educational facilities to them took practical shape in the code, when for the first time funds were provided for grants being made to schools for backward classes.[41] In 1904 the government advanced further by resolving to bear the entire cost of the primary education of backward classes.[42]

Another long-standing grievance that attracted earnest attention was the question of the right of inheritance denied to converts. A convert to Christianity lost *ipso facto* all rights to his share of the property of the family to which he was entitled before his conversion.[43] The government enjoyed the right to "assume such property as may have been left by a deceased person being a Hindu by religion and leaving no heirs but such as had become converts to a different religion".[44] Also, the children of the Christian converts were separated from their parents by their maternal uncles to whom they belonged as per the customs of Travancore, to prevent their conversion to Christianity.[45] These formed obstacles to the conversion of rich Hindus.[46] To the missionaries, this was revolting to the claims of justice by which none should be deprived of property, consort and children merely on account of a change in religious conception; this would apply equally to the Hindu who became a Muhammadan, or a Brahma-Samajist, or an Arya-Samajist or a Theosophist or a convert to any other faith.[47]

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[40] "Many social and political influences" G.A. Ballard, the Resident writes, "are at work to sap the difficulty in question, and it would be far better to trust to their natural, steady and slow operation than to adopt any coercive system calculated to produce discontent and to check the diffusion of knowledge among all classes". Fort St. George, dated Cochin, 9 March 1870. *Pol. Proc., 23 April 1870*, No. 23, p. 5

[41] *T.S.M.*, Vol. II. pp. 481-82

[42] *Travancore Gazette*, 16 August 1904, No. 29, vol. VIII, Educationar Department, p. 180

[43] Memorial of the South Indian Missionary Conference to H.E. the Viceroy, dated Madras, 22 May 1900. *G.O.* Nos, 599, 600, 6 Octobel 1901. Government of Madras, Political Department.

The missionaries of the L. M. S applied themselves earnestly to the struggle for correcting these civil disabilities. The immediate provocation was the unjust proceedings on a case filed in the Padmanabhapuram civil court. The complainant in the said case was a Christian convert claiming the property of his deceased Hindu brother.[48] The court declared that in conformity with the *Dharmasastram*

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[44] *Alleged Religious Persecution - An Explanation* (Pamphlet), p. 4

[45] Memorril of the Missionaries of the L.M.S. in Travancore, 18 July 1859, *Pol Proc., 1859,* vol. III, p. 129. "According to the customs of Malabar the children were regarded as belonging to, and heirs of, their maternal uncle; and their father, upon whom they had no claim. could exercise no power over them, the paternal right and authority being absolutely vested in the uncle. Minutes of Consultation, No. 82 of 14 February 1854. *Ibid.,* App.G, p. 146

[46] Rev. J. Duthie, "The Travancore L. M. S. Mission", *H. F.,* vol. VII, (October, 1896), pp. 364-68

[47] Robert N. Cust, "The Civil Disabilities of Christian Converts in British India". *The Indian Church Quarterly Review,* vol. VII (October, 1894), pp. 416-22

[48] The Christian who filed the case was Ramachandran, a convert from the Nadar caste. His Christian name was Vethanayagam.

and the usage of the country he would not be entitled to the property and that it would be forfeited to the government.[49] Commenting on the effects of the case C M Agar says: "A few men apostatized and a good many who were willing to hear the teachings of Christianity and become followers of Christ seeing the losses that other converts underwent kept themselves back".[50] The missionaries criticized the unhelpful attitude of the English East India Company in this matter. In the address to his countrymen in 1837, Charles Mead said:

> There are many Hindus who would be glad if they could have the shield of civil protection thrown around their persons and their property, both of which may be endangered by their embracing Christianity. I have the utmost respect for the authorities in India, I have been laid under great personal obligations to them: but you must not think that the work is done because you have got a charter which enables the Missionaries to go there. You must see that both the Missionaries and the converts are protected, and that the Gospel has free and uninterrupted progress throughout those regions.[51]

The vociferous prayers of the missionaries to the Madras Government and the Government of India resulted in the passing of an Act on 11 April, 1850, known as "Caste Disablities Removal Act", which declared that change of religion would not deprive a man of his right to property.[52] It was enacted in all the dominions under the direct control of the British in India. But Travancore, a princely state, was opposed to the Act, and therefore reluctant to take steps to implement the same. However, on 29 June, 1869 the government issued a proclamation relinquishing all its rights to the property of a Hindu, who became a convert to Christianity or any other religion and died leaving no heirs.[53] The Madras Government considered the proclamation as "evidence of the liberal spirit with which the administration of His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore is conducted"[54]

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[49] *Pol. Proc., 1859,* vol. III, App. F, p. 145

[50] C. M. Agur, *op. cit.,* p. 894

[51] Farewell Address of Rev. Charles Mead in the Exeter Hal, London (May, 1838). *Ibid.,* pp. 871-72. The Christians in other parts of India also suffered from similar disabilities and hence missionaries in those parts also agitated for their removal, and contributed their mite in the securing of the rights of Christians.

The reluctance of the Travancore Government to enact the Caste Disabilities Removel Act of 1850 in full in its

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[52] The Act XXI of 1850 or Caste Disabilities Removal Act, consisted of one section: "So much of any law or usage now in force within the territories subject to the Government of the English East India Company as inflicts on any person forfeiture of rights or property, or may be held in any way to impair or affect any right of inheritance by reason of his or her renouncing or having been excluded from the communication of any religion or being deprived of caste, shall cease to be enforced as law in the Courts of the English East India Company, and in the Courts established by Royal Charter within the said territories". *G. O.* Nos. 599, 600, 9 October 1901. Government of Madras, Political Department, p. 3

[53] The Resident to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Trivandrum, 8 July 1869. *G. O.* Nos. 52-53, 21 July 1869, Government of Madras, Political Department. The proclamation said: "We hereby notify that, from and after the date hereof, the Sirkar relinquishes all claims to property so left, which will descend to the natural heirs independently of religious considerations, subject only to such public demands as would hold in the case of succession by Hindoo heirs". Proclamation of the Maharaja of Travancore, 17 Mithunam 1044/29 June 1869. *Ibid*

[54] Order, dated 21 July 1859. No. 53, *Ibid*

dominion made the missionaries impatient The courts were bound to follow the Hiudu law and they were guided by existing customs and the converts lost on account of their conversion to Christianity all rights to the property of their family.[55] So in 1889 the missionaries of the L. M. S. in Travancore submitted a petition to the Raja to secure equal and impartial justice to the people of Travancore. The missionaries observed:

> While entire liberty of conscience is professedly the law of Travancore, a severe deprivation has been inflicted for many years past on all converts from Malayali or Marumakkathayam castes in the loss of all their rights of inheritance and maintenance from the common property of the family, and this is in glaring contrast to the law of British India.[56]

They requested the Raja to remove this existing anomaly by enacting the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850 in Travancore.[57] The Directors of the L.M.S in London were also earnest about the removal of the civil disabilities of the Christians in Travancore. They requested the Secretary of State for India, Marquis of Landsdowne, to use his "good offices with the Maharajah and Government of Travancore to secure the removal of all civil disabilities which now rest upon Christians inconsequence of the profession of Christianity".[58] The Mission Conference of the Church Missionary

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[55] Petition of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore to His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore. *G. O.* No. 601, 11 September 1897, Government of Madras, Political Department, p. 5

[56] *Ibid*

[57] *Ibid*

[58] R. Wardlaw Thompson, Foreign Secretary of the L. M. S., to the Secretary of State for India, Blomfield, London, 2 January 1894. G. O. Nos. 599, 600, 9 October 1901, Government of Madras, Political Department, p. 115

Society also sent a memorandum in August 1895 to the Governor of Madras on the subject of the disabilities of Christian converts in Travancore and the T. D. C. of the L. M. S unanimously supported it.[59]

The Madras Government was originally disposed to advise the Darbars of Travancore and Cochin to protect the Christian converts within their territories by legislation on the lines of the Caste Disabilities Removal Act of 1850. The Governor-in-Council in an order dated 10 June, 1896 considered it "desirable that the same protection should be secured to Christian converts in Travancore and Cochin as is afforded to that class in British India", and directed the Resident "to advise the Durbars of those states accordingly, and to propose to them the introduction of a regulation securing to a Nayar convert to Christianity his rights to maintenance from his Tarawad property, whilst declaring him at the same time ineligible, by reason of his change of faith, to become the Karanavan of the Tarawad or the trustee of a Hindu institution."[60] But the proposal met with unanimous opposition from both the states on the ground that it would undermine the very fabric of the social order. It was pointed out that "the fundamental principle of the community is the joint family system, according to which the family property is indivisible and members of the family are only entitled to maintenance therefrom so long as they discharge certain religious duties

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[59] Rev. J. Duthie to the Governor of Madras, dated Nagercoil, 27 August 1895, *Ibid.*, p. 109

[60] The Disabilities of Christians in Travancore (Editorial). *H. F.*, vol. VII, (August, 1889), p. 320

in which a convert to Christianity is unable to join."[61] Similarly, the Roman Catholics, who formed the majority of the Christians in Travancore, were disinterested as the converts to their fold were mainly drawn from classes having no status in land. So the Madras Government thought that the proposed legislation "might become a source of trouble, and fail to benefit those in whose interest it was designed"; and hence did not pursue the matter further.[62] The Government of India also accepted the decision of the Madras Government in the matter.[63]

In May 1900, the South Indian Missionary Conference, consisting of the Protestant missionaries of all denominations in South India, took up the matter and expressed their anxiety over the "injustice done to converts to Christianity in the Native States of Travancore, Cochin, and Mysore,[64] in depriving them of civil rights, solely on the ground of their change in religious convictions."[65] They expressed deep regret at the backsliding of the Government of India. But the Government of India, in spite of all these entreaties, refused to move further.[66]

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[61] O. V. Bosanquet, Officiating Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, to the Foreign Secretary, L. M. S. *Pol. Proc., November 1898* *G. O.* No. 816, 25 November 1898, Government of Madras, Political Department

[62] *Ibid.* Under the circumstances the Governor-in-Council considered it unnecessary to direct the Resident to advise the Darbars of Travancore and Cochin to take any further action in the matter. G. Stokes, Chief Secretary to Government, to the Resident. G. O. No. 693, 30 September 1898, Government of Madras, Political Department

[63] George Hamilton to His Excellency the Governor General-in-Council, dated London, 13 June 1902. *G. O.* No. 526, (Confidential) 13 June 1902, No. 50, Government of Madras, Political Department

[64] The Christian converts in Mysore were also subjected to severe disabilities, as in Travancore and Cochin

By now the attitude of the authorities in London also became lukewarm in respect of pursuing the measure, mostly due to the anxiety shared by the Madras Government along with the governments of Travancore and Cochin that such a reform would gravely affect the social set-up of the state.[67] After an elaborate examination of the whole question in all its ramifications, they also concluded that it did not "appear to be consonant with justice or good policy to impose such measures by the authority of the British Government upon the two States (Travancore and Cochin)", and accepted the decision of the Government of India.[68] Thus ended the struggle of the missionaries for securing the right of Chritian converts to inherit the property of their family.

The zealous missionaries of the L.M.S., fighting for the removal of disabilities, awakened the poor and downtrodden people to a sense of self-respect and better living. Their strenuous efforts negatived or rather neutralized the ill-effects of

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[65] Memorial of the South Indian Missionary Conference to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General-in-Council, dated Madras, 22 May 1900. *G. O.* Nos. 599, 600, 9 October 1901, Government of Madras, Political Department, pp. 139-40

[66] Rev. D. A. Rees, "The Disabilities of Converts in Native states", *H. F.*, vol. XI, (December, 1900), pp. 446-48

[67] George Hamilton to His Excellency the Governor General-in-Council, dated India Office, London, 13 June 1902. *G. O.* No. 526, 13 June 1902, No. 50 (Confidential), Government of Madras, Political Department

[68] *Ibid*

caste rules and customary observances. The conception of social freedom, justice and equality for lower classes, was an original idea conceived and carried out by the missionaries with commendable zeal in the midst of opposition. They put their shoulders to the yoke for the uplift of depraved humanity. The Brahmins and other caste Hindus could not claim this credit. It is a strange paradox that foreigners, and not any indigenous Messiah, turned out to be the redeemers of a divided, disintegrating nation. Such an event will surely be remembered as a mile stone in the chequered history of this land. As Nagam Aiya has aptly remarked: "It is a glory reserved to this century of human progress – the epoch of the happy commingling of the civilization of the west with that of the east".[69]

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[69] *Report on the Census of Travancore – Taken by the Command of His Highness on the 26th February 1891*, vol. I, p. 472

CHAPTER X

RELATIONS BETWEEN THE MISSIONARIES AND THE TRAVANCORE GOVERNMENT

The Hindu rulers of Travancore, at all times, habitually showed a spirit of toleration toward their subjects professing alien faiths. This attitude won for them the genuine admiration of all students of history. At a time when Christians in other parts of the world were persecuting fellow Christians and being persecuted in turn, the rulers of Kerala were much considerate toward colonies of Christian immigrants from Western Asia, and conferred on them substantial social privileges which gave them a status corresponding to that of the Hindus of the higher castes.[1] Foreign observers testify that they left untouched the liberty of conscience of the Christians and respected their religion.[2] However, this impartial policy of the Travancore sovereigns toward Christianity was not viewed by the caste Hindus in the right spirit. The large scale spreading of Catholicism and conversion of large numbers from depressed classes to that faith was considered by the caste Hindus as a challenge to Hinduism.[3] They exerted pressure on the Rajas to stem the tide against *sanatana dharma*. The Raja, styled the protector of *dharma*, had perforce to toe the caste Hindu line. A marked change in the attitude of Hindu rulers toward Christian missionary activities was seen in the last decades of the eighteenth century. Severe restrictions were put on the missionaries and the Christians. Conversion was viewed with suspicion and converts were not openly baptized by the priests for fear of being noticed by the government.[4]

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[1] The Tarisappalli copper plate inscriptions of Sthanu Ravi Varma in 848-849 A. D., granted to the Christians of Kerala tax exemption and seventy two privileges. The first copper plate inscription granting rights and privileges to the Christians said: "These rights granted as Attipperu (grant made permanently) by this Copper plate shall be enjoyed so long as the earth, moon and the sun last". For details regarding the inscriptions, see Elamkulam P. N. Kunjan Pillai, *Studies in Kerala History*, pp. 370-77

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[2] Claudius Buchanan, *Christian Researches in Asia*, p. 98

[3] After the first few centuries, the Christians of Kerala do not seem to have carried on any evangelistic work among the non-Christians. This contributed to a great extent to the fairly unmolested life which the Christian population enjoyed. This set-up changed with the arrival of Francis Xavier, and the conversion in large numbers of Mukkuvas or fisher people in the sixteenth century.

[4] Fra Paolino Da San Bartalomeo, *A Voyage to the East Indies*, pp. 203-4. Thomas Whitehouse had recorded a few instances of bitter persecution. In 1746 Raja Marthanda Varma sacrificed fifteen infants belonging partly to the Christians of the fisher caste, and partly to the Nadar and the Ezhava, who were buried alive in the four quarters of Trivandrum, the royal city, after cermonies performed by Brahmins. In 1780, Nagam Pillai, the Dewan of Travancore, started a severe persecution of the Catholic converts of the Nadar caste. Some Nairs who embraced Christianity and refused to renounce it, were transported beyond the boundaries of Tovala when all inducements had failed. Thomas Whitehouse, *Lingerings of Light in a Dark Land*, pp. 215-23

It was in this environment that Protestant Christianity was brought to Travancore by William Tobias Ringeltaube. He says that the Brahmins were the sworn enemies of Christianity.[5] But we do not see them coming into direct conflict with the Missionaries or with the Christians except on a few occasions. As they had direct access to the royal court, they expressed their hostility through the authority of the Raja. It was the Nairs who offered active and direct opposition to missionary work. They feared that the spread of Christianity would destroy the caste system and along with it, their political power and influence. In other words, they were unable to tolerate the social changes and the progress of the suppressed people. They took Christianity as a revolt against their established customs and practices, and associated it with the political imperialism of the British. The missionaries of the L.M.S in Travancore combined religious and social work; the result was the creation of a new consciousness among the lower classes making it possible for them to free themselves from social oppression. This was in all respects against the will and pleasure of the Travancore Government which was of the caste Hindus, by the caste Hindus, and for the caste Hindus.

The missionaries of the L.M.S. were looked upon by the Travancore Government as a set of people trying to subvert the existing social fabric of the state. They alleged that the missionaries were encouraging the backward classes to defy the caste Hindus, and that their intention apparently was to introduce English customs and usages in Travancore. Prominent Hindus believed that the missionaries were using the name and power of the British to convert the people and were claiming perfect toleration and liberty for their converts, without taking into consideration the time, the country, the nature of the government, and their own position in a foreign land. Shungoony Menon writes:

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[5] Ringeltaube's Journal, dated Palayamkotta, 19 June 1806. William Robinson, *Ringeltaube, The Rishi: Letters and Journals*, p. 78

> The system adopted by the London Mission savoured more of the undue and illegitimate exercise of power than persuasion and well-meant endevours to impress upon people of the truth of the principles of religion and hence, the chief cause for the Hindus to be dissatisfied with them and to consider their proceedings offensive.[6]

The Travancore Government claimed that in spite of the opposition of Hindus, it afforded toleration and protection to the Christian Missions, and that the work of the missionaries progressed rapidly. But without considering this fact, the missionaries charged the government of cruel and unfair machinations against them.[7] The government also held that the aim of the missionaries was to increase in every possible way their own prestige and the prestige of the Christian Church by winning the largest possible numbert of converts without any real regard for actual conversion[8] The Raja feared the caste Hindus and therefore did no act against their sentiments. His main concern was the welfare and satisfaction of the caste Hindus, with whom he was associated.[9] Therefore the government was to follow a neutral policy as long as the missionaries avoided

[6] P. Shungoony Menon, *A History of Travancore*, pp. 505-6

[7] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore to Sir Charles Trevelyan, 18 July 1859. *Pol. Proc.*, *1859*, vol. III, pp. 126-32 P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 511

[8] Rev. John Mackenzie (ed.), *The Christian Task in India*, p. 186

[9] T. Madhava Row to General Cullen, 17 May 1859. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 93-94; *T. S. M.*, vol. II, p. 481

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injuring the interests of caste Hindus. T. Madhava Row wrote to General Cullen on 24 November, 1868:

> So long as the Missionaries and their converts do not bring themselves into collision with the Hindoos of high caste, and do conduct themselves peaceably and prudently, there is not the slightest objection on the part of the Sircar to the dissemination of Christianity in this country to the widest possible extent and it ever has been, and ever shall be the care of the Sircar that it shall suffer neither itself nor its Hindoo subjects to be the first to offend in their dealings with the Missionaries or their people.[10]

The Hindus thought that the Christian missionaries were aiming at the destruction of Hinduism by attacking their age-old customs and institutions. They accused the government of pro-Christian leanings. Madhava Row writes:

> The Hindoo inhabitants of Travancore in general, seriously entertain the impression that the Sircar is too much influenced by a leaning to Missionary views, and that, while the State religion is Hindooism, the State is identifying itself with efforts directed against that religion.[11]

The missionaries accused the government of following barbarous customs, usages and institutions. They alleged that the government was practising "intolerance, under a profession of toleration".[12] The lower classes of people

[10] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, 24 November 1868. *Pol. Proc.* 1869, vol. III, p. 444

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 441

[12] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S., 18 July 1859. *Ibid.*, 1859, vol. III, p. 128

suffered injustice at the hands of the government and the caste Hindus. The missionaries declared that the state was "priest-ridden, and by no means the model, which it has long been represented to be''.[13] The officials were prejudiced against the weaker sections and perpetrated injustice in the name of administration of justice. Frederick Baylis wrote:

> I have never yet known of any complaint brought by one of the lower classes against one of the highest in Travancore receiving any proper attention in the Police. All the officials are banded together against the unfortunate applicant for justice - all kinds of intimidations and oppressions are resorted to, until he is wearied out, finding that he only get further trouble for all his efforts to get his complaint redressed.[14]

This and the existence of caste system proved severe hindrances to the work of the missionaries. Their efforts to break the barriers of caste, the fountain of all social evils, were not viewed by the government in a favourable light Baylis writes:

> They are still spoken of as Christian Shanars, Christian Elavers etc., and are compelled to give the names of their caste in all cases in the Police and Courts.[15]

The chief concern of the missionaries was their converts, recruited from various depressed classes. Their main aim was to give them salvation, both temporal and spiritual.

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[13] "The State of Travancore" (Editorial), *H. F.*, vol. VII, (November, 1896), p. 440

[14] F. Baylis to General W. Cullen, dated Neyyur, 1 January 1859. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 17 - 19

[15] F. Baylis to W. Cullen, dated Neyyur, 10 January 1859, Ibid., p. 51

But to achieve the aim they had miles to go and mountains of penance to climb. To them it was a very big task: to erect a superstructure on a weak foundation. The missionaries wrote to Charles Trevelyan, the Governor of Madras, on 18 July, 1859:

> Even the once impenetrable barriers of China and Japan are now thrown down, but Travancore, while open to intercourse, still maintains an inner wall of ancient and barbarous customs and caste prejudices, not merely prevailing as such among the people, but entering into the whole constitution of Government, and enforced by authority - which has the effect of perverting justice, excluding the people from improvement and the country from prosperity.[16]

The root cause of opposition against the missionary activities in Travancore was the caste system. The missionaries regarded this hydra-headed monster as their greatest enemy. The supporters of caste fully reciprocated this sentiment and regarded the missionaries as the greatest foes of that institution. The supporters of the caste system consisted of two groups. One group consisted of people who clinged to the caste system because they conscientiously believed that caste was the bed-rock of Hinduism and that any attempt to tamper with it was an attack on their religion. The other group consisted of people who, though not morally inconvenienced by any religious scruples, hugged caste system because it ministered to their selfishness, greed, and lust for power over the person and property of large numbers of their fellowmen. It was firmly believed that every one must die in the caste or religion in which one was born, and that it was foolish for any man even to dream that he could improve his social or spiritual position by changing his faith. They held that it was wrong on the part of any man to try to convert to his own faith the adherents of any other faith.

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[16] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore, 18 July 1859. *Pol. Proc., 1859*, vol. III, p. 132

The privileged classes were anxious that those belonging to lower classes should permanently remain as their hereditary servants whose services they should be able to command on their own terms They also wanted that the social barriers that existed between them and the backward classes should be left untampered. The caste Hindus thought that the converts to Christianity would rebel against the trammels imposed upon them by ancient caste usage and assert their rights as free human beings with the spread of education. Such a change was not welcome to the caste Hindus. So they did their best to thwart the missionary and his agents in their attempt to educate and draw toward the Christian fold those miserable creatures. The following narrative will give a true picture of the relations between the missionaries and the government.

The first three years from 1806 to 1809 was a period of trial in the history of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S. It faced severe opposition from the government and caste Hindus during this period. The request of Ringeltaube for permission to establish a church was denied on the ground that it was an innovation on established customs.[17] But the general attitude changed with the suppression of the rebellion of 1809 by the British, by which the Resident became powerful in the political affairs of Travancore. Colin Macaulay and John Munro, who were Residents when the Mission was in

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[17] *L. C.*, p. 262

the fledgling stage, greatly helped it. The Travancore Government started a liberal policy toward the Mission as a result of the influence gained by the Residents in the affairs of Travancore, which proved a great blessing for the establishment of the Mission. Through the influence of Col. Munro, the first missionaries of the L. M. S were helped by the rulers with grant of land for the support of the Mission.[18] The *neettu* of the Rani granting land to Charles Mead said:

> It is given to Reverend Mr. Mead the Protestant Missionary of the Kingdom of Travancore and to those who may come in that place, to be levelled, converted into paddy fields and enjoyed from the Kar crop of 995 (1818) ... It is to be enjoyed as the moon and stars last.[19]

The Rani also appointed Charles Mead as judge in the court at Nagercoil.[20] The discharge of the duties connected with this high office had conferred on the local people many substantial benefits and made an impression throughout the country highly favourable to the success of missionary work. Even caste Hindus began to respect him and the Christian religion. Mead writes:

> The natives are fully sensible of the advantages enjoyed by them in the impartial administration of justice

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[18] G. Parker, History of Mission Fields, pp. 4 – 5. About the grant Ringeltaube wrote: "With regard to the fields I humbly bow the knee before the Father of every good and perfect gift, also to take this opportunity of publicly expressing my thanks to Col. Munro who employed all his influence on this occasion". Ibid

[19] Ibid., p. 8

[20] Neettu to appoint Mead as second judge in the court at Nagercoil 18 Meenam 993 M. E. Neettu vol, 78, pp. 278 – 79

> that Brahmins and Sooders, high caste and low came forward declaring - 'You are our father — our Saviour —our only protection'.[21]

The Christian converts were exempted from paying unjust taxes like the poll tax and rendering *oozhiyam*, which attracted many to the fold of Christianity. This enlightened policy of the Travancore Government gave the missionaries great satisfaction.[22]

A change came about in this liberal policy of the government in 1822. The Rani saw the Christians violating the age-old customs and traditions of the land and evading the *oozhiyam* services required of them.[23] She therefore, directed her officials to make the Christians obey the laws of the land and perform the required *oozhiyam* except on Sundays and other festival days.[24] In the same year Christians were persecuted for not paying the arrears of their toddy rent and for the wearing of upper-clothes by their women.[25] In 1829 the Rani issued a proclamation imposing many restrictions on the freedom of work and movement of the missionaries and Christians.[26] In a memorandum submitted to the Travancore Government, Rev. Hawksworth,

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[21] Letter from Rev. Charles Mead, dated Nagercoil, 26 October 1818, *E. M. M. C.*, vol. XXVII, (July, 1819), p. 303

[22] Charles Mead to Rev. Lewis, dated Nagercoil, 26 February 1821. *Ibid.*, vol. XXIX (November, 1821). p. 486

[23] Proclamation exempting Christians from oozhiyam on Sundays, 4 Kanni 997 M.E. (1822). Neettu vol. 15, No. 29, pp. 30 - 31

[24] Ibid

[25] For details see Chapter VIII

[26] Proclamation of 23 Makaram 1004 M. E. (3 February 1829). Neett vol. 20, No. 123, pp. 48 - 50

a missionary of the Church Missionary Society in Travancore, observed:

> The iujunction that converts (new or recent) should not infringe the ancient usage, cannot but mean that they should not on the ground of their conversion, act towards the high caste Hindoos in a different manner from what they were accustomed to do before their conversion. If low caste converts depart in any respect from the above rule or regulation as in the instances under reference, they necessarily infringe the custom and usage of the country and offend the feelings of the Hindoos.[27]

The prohibition relating to the erection of places of worship gave the missionaries much trouble. Under the new regulation if a European acquired land without the sanction of he Resident and the Travancore Government, it was an infraction of the regulations and established usages of the country.[28] So the missionaries wanted perfect liberty to erect places of worship for the Christians. But the Travancore Government held that the proclamation was intended to "prevent collision and intrusion by any one class of religionists against others" and was meant for "the protection of all other sects and of the Government interests, as well as of the Christians".[29]

The proclamation was an indirect incentive to those who wanted to persecute the Christians and prevent the spread of the gospel, by conveniently alleging violation of the proclamation. Charles Mead writes:

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[27] Christian converts - Their treatment in Travancore. Cover File No. 215, pp. 22 - 23

[28] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore, 18 July 1859. *Pol. Proc.*, 1859, vol. III, p. 136

[29] W. Cullen to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Udayagiri, 8 May 1855. Pol. Cons., 5 June 1855, p. 3062

> They (Christians) have been persecuted by the heathen, and forcibly taken to drag the timbers required for the repairs of the idolatrous cars; some have been imprisoned and fined; others cruelly beaten; and no redress has been obtained ... The object of the Native Government is to discourage and defeat our attempts to propagate the truth, and to compel the people who are now coming to the light, to return to the gloom of heathenism.[30]

The only solution he found to remove such a state of affairs was the annexation of Travancore by the English East India Company. He writes: "Travancore is what is called an Independent State, but according to the Treaty,[31] authority over it can be resumed at any time by the British Government, who are responsible for the due administration of justice."[32] He requested the Society to direct the attention of the Company to the state of affairs in Travancore.[33]

The relations worsened in the period of Krishna Row, who was appointed Dewan in December 1846. He exerted a malignant influence on the administration and was considered by Raja Svathi Tirunal as a 'scourge of the country'.[34] The missionaries felt that Krishna Row was indifferent

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[30] Letter from C. Mead, dated Neyyur, January 1842. *M. M. C.*, vol. VI, (April, 1842), p. 56

[31] Treaty of 1805

[32] Letter from C. Mead, dated Neyyur, January 1842. *M. M. C.*, vol. VI, (April, 1842), p. 57

[33] *Ibid*

[34] *T. S. M.*, vol. I, p. 496

to the question of redressing the grievances brought to his notice by them and was trying to prevent the spread of Christianity in Travancore. In February 1851 he issued an edict depriving Protestant Christian converts of the privileges enjoyed by them.[35] The edict prohibited the converts of the backward classes from using those roads which the high castes used. The converts were required to make use of the roads and ways assigned for the people of low castes. This resulted in "bitter persecution and indignity at the hands of those in authority, who have eagerly availed themselves of the Dewan's Edict to harass and oppress converts to the Christian faith".[36] In February 1854, Ebenezer Lewis and F. Mault, two missionaries of the L.M.S., were assaulted at Suchindram by the Brahmins when they forced their way through a religious procession. But the case was only mildly investigated and the guilty parties were never traced or brought to book.[37] In the same year there was violent persecution of Christians, and it spread to all parts of South Travancore. The missionaries came forward to assist the Christians. They raised their voice against the injustice shown by the local authorities and sought the help of the Resident. John Cox, missionary of the Trivandrum Mission district, took the initiative in bringing to the notice of the Resident several cases of persecution.[38] When he failed to get protection for Christians from any quarter in Travancore, John Cox sent a petition to the Madras Government complaining of specific acts of oppression and violence committed by the authorities in Travancore. He also forwarded several petitions from the Christian converts complaining of similar acts against them.[39]

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[35] Christian converts - Their treatment in Travancore. Cover File No. 215, pp. 3 - 4

[36] Ibid., pp. 40 - 41

[37] *Official Papers*, p. 18. The missionaries were often insulted and assaulted by the caste Hindus. The above mentioned incident is only one among a series of such incidents. In 1829, an attempt was made on the life of Charles Mead. In 1859 J. J. Dennis and James Russel were insulted by the servants of the Jail at Padmanabhapuram when they came to see some of the Christians. In 1869 William Lee was assaulted by the Brahmins of Punjalingapuram. These are only a few of the reported incidents. *Pol. Proc., 1859*, pp. 141 - 42; C. M. Agur, *op. cit*, pp. 837 - 38

The leading English newspaper in the Madras Presidency, the 'Madras Athenaeum', edited by Mr. Meade, the author of *Centenary of Plassey*, warmly espoused the cause of the persecuted Christians in Travancore It levelled a series of charges against the Travancore administration and exposed the prevalence of corruption,

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[38] *Official Papers*, pp. 13 - 18. The case which brought matters to the climax was that of Devasahayam. He was so shockingly ill - treated for refusing to perform *oozhiyam* that he vomited blood and died. John Cox took up this case and accused the Dewan and government of countenancing murder and other crimes. John Cox to the Resident' 8 January 1853. For. Pol. Cons., 28 December 1855, **Nos.** 276 - 84, pp. 118 - 19. To this letter there was no reply whatever from the Resident.

[39] *Official Papers*, p. 13. This time J. O. Whitehouse reported a case of assault on a converted slave named Arumainayakam. This case was also brought to the notice of the Madras Government, and they criticized the attitude of the government officials of Travancore for their lenient actions in such a serious crime. J. O. Whitehouse to Lord Harris, Governor, Fort St. George - in - Council, dated Nagercoil 2 April 1855. Pol. Cons., 8 May 1855, No. 21, pp. 2697 - 2702

cruelty and torture.[40] The articles exposing the maladministration and corruption so rampant in Travancore were written by a correspondent under the pseudonym 'Not the Last'. It described the Dewan in the most denigrating terms and dragged General Cullen, the Resident, into embarassing notoriety. The articles were solely intended to arouse the public conscience, and there was no personal animosity or scurrility about them[41] Athenaeum directed public attention to Travancore and its burden of social evils.

The publication of the articles continued and the result was the formation of an unfavourable public opinion regarding the Travancore administration. The people believed that there was no kingdom so badly ruled as Travancore. The Raja on hearing the reports in the Athenaeum, deputed private emissaries to the local districts to see if torture or other acts of oppression, were practised by the police and Dewan Krishna Row. He instituted thorough enquiries whereby instances of misconduct were discovered and these corroborated the facts brought out by Athenaeum.[42]

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[40] One of the articles on Travancore concluded thus: "Our correspondents ask us to denounce a host of abuses, with the particulars of which we have been duly furnished, but we prefer to store them up for a future day even at the risk of being tasked to keep down the current iniquity. Let us get the Government of Madras reconstituted and we will show its successors the fairest opportunity that ever men had, of earning a title to the thanks of mankind". Travancore, Madras Athenaeum, 20 September 1853. Ibid., 12 June 1855. pp. 3141 - 42

[41] *T. S. M.*, vol. I, p. 512

[42] P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, pp. 456 - 57; Maharaja Marthanda Varma to Lord Harris, dated Trivandrum Palace, 21 April 1856 For. Pol. Cons., 4 July 1856, Nos. 51 - 53, pp. 13 - 21

In July 1855 the missionaries presented a joint petition to the Government of Madras detailing the facts of oppression and cruelty to Christians, which highlighted the deplorably bad political atmosphere of Travancore.[43] They complained that corruption, oppression and extortion were openly practised by the government, that no redress was obtained by the Christians and others and that the most serious cases were treated by the Resident as unimportant. The police was shown as a ruthless instrument of iniquity and oppression. People were seized and imprisoned for indefinite periods without investigation. The most barbarous treatment in prison prevailed, torture was practised and robbery was rampant. The high officials were of questionable character. Criminals and inefficient men were appointed to high offices. The courts were also corrupt. A system of forced labour for government supplies existed, which opened the door of oppression wider still. The innumerable evils that arose from the pepper, salt and cardamom monopoly strangulated national development. All the evils were fully exposed in the petition. The missionaries concluded the petition by requesting "the appointment of a Commission of well qualified Europeans, with full powers first to secure the records in the Courts and Cutcherries, and then to enquire into the whole affairs of the Government". They expressed their readiness, if such a Commission should be appointed, "to bring forward abundant proof, by oral and documentary evidence, and by witnesses, both Native and European, well acquainted with the matters of enquiry."[44]

The petitions sent by the missionaries to the Governor at Madras were forwarded to the Resident, General Cullen,

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[43] Vide App. V

[44] Petition of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore, dated Nagercoil, 26 July 1855, Nos. 276 – 84, pp. 83 - 84

with instruction to institute immediate enquiries, and report upon the allegations contained in them John Cox tried his best to prove the charges brought forward against the Travancore Government.[45] The Resident on the other hand, tried to defend the government by bringing forward the underlying causes for the strained feelings between the government and the missionaries. He writes:

> All missionaries are notoriously deceived and misled by their catechists; they are more over prone to interfere in local disputes. The converts claim exemption, on account of their assumed religion, from service which they are bound by law to perform, and are supported by the missionaries.[46]

In his reply to the Madras Government the Resident denied the charge of the existence of persecution of Christian converts on religious or other grounds. He asserted that "the requisition of the subordinate district servants for Oolium duties from these lower castes and the not unfrequent resistance of the converts whenever they have the opportunity has no doubt led to frequent quarrels and recrimination".[47] But seeing that the charges alleged were of a very grave nature and that they were corroborated in some measure by the constant petitions received from the people of Travancore, the Madras Government felt that investigation of some sort was imperative.[48]

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[45] *Official Papers*, pp. 13 - 17, 31 - 33

[46] The Resident to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, 8 May 1855. *Ibid.*, p. 14

[47] Governor - in – Council to Court of Directors, 24 December 1855. Foreign Department, Madras Political Despatch to Court of Directors, 24 Decembe, 1855, para 9

[48] Letter to the Government of India, 13 August 1855. *Official Papers* p. 31

The frequent apearance in the Athenaeum of various unfavourable accounts about Travancore, the financial depression and the expenditure of the state, attracted the attention of the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie.[49] He considered it a favourable opportunity for the Government of India to interfere in the affairs of Travancore.[50] He wrote a minute containing instructions to the Madras Government to impress upon the Raja of Travancore the necessity of immediate reformation and correction of the disorganized state of affairs. The Governor General directed the Madras Government "to call for some formal and forcible expression of the sentiments of the British Government on the abuses, which, there is reason to believe do prevail in the state of Travancore" and suggested that "under the nineth article of the Treaty such an expression of the sentiments of the British Government with suitable advice and warning may be addressed to His Highness the Rajah of Travancore by the Government of Madras".[51] Accordingly, Lord Harris, the Governor of Madras, addressed a letter to the Raja Marthanda Varma inviting his attention to the misrule and manifold abuses rampant in Travancore and advised him to avert the impending calamity of the interference of the Government of India in the internal affairs of Travancore on the strength of article 9 of the treaty of 1805 by introducing an enlightened policy and judicious reforms.[52] The Raja in his reply to the Madras

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[49] Governor General to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 12 October 1855. For. Pol. Cons., 28 December 1855, Nos. 276 - 84, pp. 285 - 90

[50] P. Shungoony Menon, *op. cit.*, p. 481

[51] Governor General to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 12 October 1855. For. Pol. Cons., 28 December 1855, Nos. 276 - 84, pp. 285 - 90

[52] Lord Harris to Maharaja Marthanda Varma, 21 November 1855. *T. S. M.*, vol. I, pp. 513 - 15; *Official Papers*, p. 32

Government admitted that there were just grounds for complaints: "That venality does exist, it is a fear impossible to deny, but I feel assured that it does not obtain to that extent to which your Lordship appears to have been led to believe".[53]

The Madras Government urged the Government of India to appoint a Commission to inquire into the affairs of Travancore, to conduct a minute and searching scrutiny into the entire system of the administration in all its branches, into the present condition, and into the past proceedings of the Dewan and the Resident, as requested by the missionaries[54] But the Government of India was not to appoint a Commission to investigate the condition of Travancore and there the matter rested[55] Moreover, Dewan Krishna Row, the subject of the major complaints died in 1858, thereby making the proposed investigation unnecessary.[56]

In spite of all these efforts of the missionaries to put a stop to the persecution of Christians, the Travancore authorities totally ignored them. The officers were left free to do what they pleased to the lower castes.[57] The missionaries found it difficult to get justice for the Christians.

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[53] Marthanda Varma to Lord Harris, dated Trivandrum Palace, 21 April 1856. For. Pol. Cons., 4 July 1856, Nos. 51 - 53, pp. 15 - 16

[54] Simson, Under Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary to the Government, Fort St. George, dated Fort William, 9 March 1859. *Official Papers*, pp. 36 - 37

[55] *Ibid.*, p. 37; T. Pycroft to G. T. Edmonstone, Fort St. George, 6 February 1858. For. Pol. Cons., 15 April 1859, Nos. 51 - 55, pp. 95 - 96

[56] *Official Papers*, pp. 35 - 36

[57] The Humble Petition of Visvasam Vedanayagam, Catechist, to the Resident, 19 February 1858. Cover File No. 2115, pp. 81 - 83

When such was the strained relations between the missionaries and the government, theup per-cloth revolt broke out for the third time in 1858.[58] The missionaries feared that the caste Hindus were trying to drive them out of this land.[59] This again prompted them to request the British Government to interfere in the affairs of Travancore. In a memorial to Sir C. E. Trevelyan, the Governor of Madras, dated 18 July, 1859. the missionaries of the L. M. S levelled a series of charges againt the Travancore Government. The missionaries' had to obtain special permission to reside in a local state. They were treated as local men and had to obey the laws and customs of the state.[60] To them these rules were highly anomalous and objectionable; so they requested the Governor - in - Council to direct "the Travancore Government to exempt them from liability to the Native laws, and to place them in all respects, both as to privileges and liabilities, under the British Resident for the time being, or such authority as the British Government may deem proper to appoint - as British subjects in Turkey, China, and other Eastern countries have been placed under the jurisdiction of Consuls or other Officers appointed by the British Government".[61] They believed that only the British Government could effect the improvements so much needed in Travancore, and to remove the evils that existed contrary to the upright "administration of justice" and "to the happiness of the people" the missionaries demanded the direct interference of the British Government in the affairs

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[58] For details see Chapter VIII

[59] Letter from F Baylis. *M. M. C.,* vol. XXIX (June, 1860), p. 170

[60] Letter of J S. Fraser, dated Trivandrum, 13 July 1837. *Pol. Proc., 1859,* vol. III, pp. 136 - 37

[61] Memorial of the Missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore, 18 July 1859. *Ibid* . p. 127

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of Travancore as per the treaty of 1805.[62] The removal of General Cullen, the Resident, and the appointment of Maltby as his successor, set the matter right for the time being.[63]

The agitation of the missionaries ultimately resulted in a change of policy on the part of the Government of Travancore. The officials changed their attitude toward the Christians and the missionaries.[64] G. O. Newport observed:

> Persecution by the heathen is not so much as it has been, except perhaps in the case of Puliars and Pariars, who, being slaves, are often dealt harshly with by their masters on account of their religion Christians are allowed to enjoy their religion in outward peace. The last few years seem to have done a great deal for Christians in Travancore.[65]

But the interregnum of peace and quiet did not last long.

On 16 August, 1868, Rev. William Lee, a missionary of the L.M.S., and his horse-keeper were assaulted by Brahmins, when they were passing through the village, Punjalingapuram as referred to earlier. Not long after this incident, the girls of the Mission Boarding School at Agasteesvaram were molested when they were passing as they usually did, through the Sudra village of Variyur.66 These incidents brought before the missionaries the problem of the right of the unprivileged classes to use roads, and other disabilities from which they suffered.67 An appeal on behalf of Lee was preferred by the missionaries to the Governor of Madras.68 This led to a much heated discussion. The Dewan condemned the desire of the missionaries to see all the existing disabilities removed. He says:

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[62] *Ibid.,* pp. 126 - 32

[63] F. N. Maltby to T. Pycroft, Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George. 15 February 1860. *Ibid., March 1860.* pp. 179 - 80

[64] F. Baylis to Dr. Tidman, dated Neyyur, 2 July 1860. *M. M. C.,* vol. XXIV, (October, 1860), p. 282

[65] *L. M. S. Report, 1865,* p. 91

> Far is it from me to blame Mr. Lee for his wishing every obstacle removed which has its origin in caste-distinctions. It is his mission; it is his aspiration to see all such distinctions nullified. Missionaries, full of zeal in their pursuits, but not bound to take other considerations into their calculations, would naturally enough wish to see such nullification effected at once.69

The missionaries were accused by the Dewan of trying to unsettle the existing set-up by enforcing rights to the extent of inflicting death on any who resisted the same. He observed:

> I think it very desirable to be explicit, especially as some of the Missionary gentlemen would, unless I am greatly mistaken, seem to be under the impression that

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[66] The Resident to the Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George, dated Trivandrum, 22 December 1868. *Pol. Proc., 1868,* vol. III, pp. 433-34. Variyur is a village near Agasteesvaram.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 434

[68] For details see Chapter IX

[69] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 24 November 1868. *Pol. Proc., 1868,* vol. III, p. 441

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> it would be quite lawful for them to take upon themselves the enforcement of rights like that in question, even to the extent of shooting down those that would resist such action. In such serious matters the utterances of authority ought to be clear and unmistakable, and hence it is my duty to state my belief that the law would not at all tolerate such proceedings on the part of any person, and the European Missionaries ought to be the last persons to drive matters to such extremity, though ofcourse it is certain that the Sircar would always use its very best exertions to afford them all due protection.70

After reviewing the whole question the Governor decided in fovour of the missionaries. William Lee, he maintained, was not making any innovation by passing through the main-street of the Brahmin village of Punjalingapuram nor was he insisting on any new right. According to him it was an indignity "perpetrated on one of Her Majesty's subjects on native territory; the respect which ought to surround our countrymen may not probably have been considerably impaired; and a victory has been secured for Brahmanical intolerance"71 The steps taken thereafter by the Madras Government paved the way for the introduction of a series of liberal and benevolent reforms for the welfare of the people of Travancore.72 Gradually, most of the disabilities for the removal of which the missionaries strove hard, have disappeared.

In the last decades of the nineteenh century, the missionaries concentrated their attention mainly on the

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[70] T. Madhava Row to the Resident, dated Trivandrum, 5 Novembe 1868. *Ibid.*, p. 438

[71] Minute by His Excellency the President, 30 May 1869. *Ibid.*, p. 444

[72] For details, see Chapter IX

organization of the local churches and thus inaugurated an era of religious activity. They were also actively involved in the church union movement in South India. These developments within the Travancore Mission pushed the social concerns to a secondary place. The educated Christians worked for the good of the poor people and presented petitions direct to the government for the redressal of their grievances. In the early decades of the twentieth century there was an intellectual awakening throughout Kerala and several social reformers like Sri Narayana Guru, Kumaran Asan, Aiyan Kali and others entered the field with the avowed objective of uplifting the backward classes. They took the surplice of 'peaceful agitation for social rights' from the hands of the missionaries, and made a tremendous impact on the social life of Kerala in the twentieth century. Sensing the spirit of the times the Travancore Government gradually relinquished its earlier role - the role as protector of the special privileges of caste Hindus, and took up the responsibility of uplifting the lower classes. Caste Hindus also began to co-operate in the efforts of the government for the advancement of the unprivileged classes.[73] Now the missionaries started concentrating mainly on religious and educational matters. These developments normalized the strained relations between the Mission and the Travancore Government.

The persecution which the missionaries complained of was actually prompted more by social and economic considerations

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[73] With the rise of an enlightened group of caste Hindus in Kerala, public opinion rose in favour of the demands of the non-caste Hindus and other depressed classes. In fact, many of them came forward as leaders of backward communities to advocate their cause. For instance G. Govinda Pillai chose to serve as the President of the Pulaya Sabha and K. G. Sesha Aiyar that of the fisher Christians.

than by any religious intolerance on the part of the ruling class. The missionaries themselves would find it hard to deny that one of the important factors for the tremendous growth of the Travancore Mission - "the pride of achievement of the L. M. S." - was "the strong element of patronage towards Christian institutions" and the "courteous interest of the reigning house and of highly placed government officials".[74]

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[74] Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1895 - 1945*, pp. 42 - 43

CONCLUSION

We have reviewed in the foregoing pages, the history of the inception and development of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S and its impact on society. This memorable event in the religious history of Travancore was closely linked with colonialism. It was the radical changes in the early nineteenth century political set - up of Travancore that opened the doors of this compact kingdom, dominated by a caste Hindu hierarchy, for the religious and humanitarian work of the missionaries. Many of the British Residents in the court of the Rajas of Travancore actively supported the cause of the missionaries. In this connection three names are important; Col. Colin Macaulay, who was mainly responsible for the origin of the work, Col. John Munro, a zealous friend of the Mission, who enlarged and strengthened it, and Col. Fraser, who helped to start a Mission station in Trivandrum. Their patronizing zeal was conditioned by political intentions. Col. Munro believed that "the support of a respectable body of Christian subjects would contribute to strengthen the British Power" and encouragement to them from the British Government would "firmly attach themselves to its interests, and may prove of material services in supporting its power".[1] After a careful observation of the people he came to the conclusion that Protestantism would make rapid progress among them and submitted a report on the state of Christianity in Travancore requesting the Madras Government to patronize it.[2] But no steps were taken by the Madras Government to patronize Christianity in Travancore. John Munro was very much impressed by the small group of Protestant Christians formed by Ringeltaube at Mailadi. He writes of them in his report to the Chief Secretary, Madras Government:

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[1] Col. John Munro to Chief Secretary to Government, Fort St. George dated Quilon, 30 March 1818. Pol. Cons., Fort St. George, 27 October 1818, No. 9. p. 1822

> The small Protestant community formed by Mr. Ringeltaube in the South of Travancore, although still in a state of infancy is extremely respected, its neophytes are called the Vadakars, or persons of the Book, and sometimes the people of sutteevada (Pure religion).[3]

At the time Ringeltaube achieved this great success, the general belief prevailing was that there was no human possibility of converting the Hindus to any sect of Christianity.[4]

The chief merit of the missionary work in Travancore is that it lifted the converts from the 'Slough of Despond', from the lowest abyss of social and moral degradation to the high Christian standard of life and morality. The work of the missionaries was in general persuasive and propagandist. Their main objects were:

1 To make known the glad tidings of the gospel, and give everyone the opportunity of learning it.

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[2] Ibid., pp. 1815-35

[3] Ibid., p. 1834

[4] Abbe J.A. Dubois, *Letters on the State of Christianity in India*, p.2

2 To maintain an affectionate and watchful care over their congregations.

3 To organize and educate an earnest and aggressive local church, by which agency alone the eventual evangelization of the state could be hoped for, and

4 To shatter the barriers that obstructed the free spread of the gospel.

The missionaries of the L. M. S in Travancore achieved all their aims by dint of hard work.

The commencement of the L. M. S in Travancore in 1806 was in a very humble and unpretentious manner, though it assumed large dimensions later. At first conversion to Christianity was slow. The first Protestant church established by Ringeltaube at Mailadi comprised of only Parayas. By systematic work Ringeltaube was successful in admitting 1, 100 Christians to the Christian fold. His work was carried on vigorously by successive generations of missionaries and local workers. Among them the most important name is that of Charles Mead, 'the master-workman' who spoon-fed the fledgling Mission left by Ringeltaube, and shaped it into an extensive organization. He guided the destinies of the Mission at a most critical period of its history. It was during his period that large numbers of Nadars joined Christianity. His most important contribution was the establishment of an organized L. M. S church which far exceeded general anticipation in the matter of stability and cohesion.

The Protestant missionary societies which operated in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries scored significant victories in the areas where traditional patterns that germinated in the ancient past, persisted unchallenged. Conversion in most of the cases in Travancore was not from conviction or faith. A good number of people joined

Christianity mainly to get social relief and some immediate temporal good. The first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the Nadar mass-movements toward Christianity, and the second half that of the depressed classes, mainly Parayas and Pulayas. When the Nadars saw the new Christians gaining powerful friends they also offered themselves for Christian baptism in the hope of obtaining the same boon. The lower classes in general found that the missionaries and their agents were sincere friends, ardent religious instructors, helpers in times of sickness, faithful advisers in difficulty, and mediators in litigous quarrels. They recognized the value of such aid, and therefore felt an inclination toward Christianity. Now the question may be asked, why the Nadars and the lower classes embraced Christianity, while the caste Hindus kept aloof? The lower classes in general were only partially bound by the laws of caste. The converts from such castes were not expelled from their respective castes and cut off from all intercourse with their relatives and friends, as a Brahmin or Nair was in similar circumstances. A caste Hindu lost everything if he became a convert, while an untouchable lost only very little or practically nothing. Moreover, the latter were accustomed to act together as a family and it was the general tendency of the ordinary members in a family to follow the example of the influential ones. James Hough writes:

> The father of a Shanar family generally brought over to the Church the whole of his relatives; and example of the Headman of a village was often followed by the rest of the inhabitants.[5]

The emergence of the indigenous Church was the most characteristic feature in the history of the Travancore

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[5] Rev. James Hough, *The History of Christianity in India*, vol. III, p. 679

Mission of the L. M. S. The movement to achieve the triple objectives of self-support, self-government and self-propagation, which played a vital role in fashioning missionary policy after 1866, was completely successful in the Travancore Mission. The missionaries were able to train up an able group of Christians to control thei churches. The churches were served by local men and women; thus gradually the leadership of the European missionaries was smoothly terminated. In the process of worship in the churches indigenous art was being used: thus the supreme activity of the churches - adoration - became more than an echo of the music and devotional practices of the West. In many incidental features of the daily life of the churches indigenous ideas and customs were being fruitfully employed. The role played by the Christians in the various church activities enabled the missionaries to take a wider view of the problems of the church and work actively for a union of all the churches in India. The part played by the missionaries of the L. M. S., especially James Duthie, along with the missionaries of other Protestant Missions, in bringing about a union of all the churches, is unique. Their work fructified in the formation of the S. I. U. C., the greatest event in the history of the Church in India. In the year 1908, when this union was effected, Travancore topped the list in the number of converts, churches, Christian workers and assistants, hitherto contributed by the L. M. S with the single exception of Madagascar.[6] Of the 1,42,000 Christians coming under the S. I. U. C., 74,000 belonged to the Travancore Mission.[7] The churches in Travancore attained strength and stability and many churches managed to conduct religious activities without the leadership and assistance of the European missionaries. This was the greatest achievement of the Travancore Mission in the religious field.

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[6] Richard Lovett, *History of the London Missionary Society, 1795 - 1895*, p. 150

[7] *General Assembly, 1908*, p. 71

The history of the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S is, in a very real sense, the history of social changes in Travancore in the nineteenth century. The British Protestant missionaries came to India with a heritage of social activism and with a zeal to reform and regenerate the life of the people among whom they served. They conceived of the missionary movement as a great liberating force, called into being by God to rescue men and women through the power of the gospel, from sin, ignorance, false religion, and oppressive social practices. In Travancore they took a strong stand against caste distinctions within the churches and attempted through the means of higher education to permeate society with the leaven of the gospel. Their influence penetrated deep into the social tissue and cut at the root of the social system. The impact of the efforts of the missionaries in this direction shattered the existing social structure in Travancore. They brought tremendous changes in the character, life and habits of the people. The overzealous missionaries denounced the age-old religious beliefs, ceremonies, social and economic institutions, dress and mode of living, as primitive and paganistic in conception. By their condemnation of well-entrenched institutions, the missionaries weakened the social and economic order.

The social work of the missionaries had repercussions beyond the confines of the Christian group. They had no programme of 'social service' as such; but fought against inequalities in the society. The impact of the missionary work, in improving the social conditions of the people, was felt in two directions. First, the missionaries found that the converts were subjected to different types of oppressions. They actively helped the people to liberate themselves from various bondages. The laws enacted by

the state as a result of the intervention of the missionaries, benefited the non - Christians also, as in the case of the removal of restrictions on the wearing of clothes. Thus the legislations, which were meant for the Christians primarily, took on a wider social significance. Secondly, the missionaries worked for the removal of certain social institutions which they thought evil and non-conducive to the welfare of the people. In such cases their work was not limited to their followers alone, but included all. Their struggle for the abolition of slavery and for the removal of civil disabilities are standing examples of this attitude.

The missionaries realised that a sound system of education was an absolute necessity for the spreading of Christianity and progress of society. It was the missionaries of the L. M. S who started the first English schools in Travancore. Their system of education contributed to the emancipation of the depressed classes. This was the first time in the history of Travancore that the educational process was democratized. In the Mission schools children were admitted regardless of caste. This was a revolutionary change which cut right across the old concept of *dharma*. According to the *dharma* the lower caste people were denied this privilege. Education considerably enhanced their status as well as their economic condition. The missionaries instilled in them a feeling of self-awareness through their system of education. Says Samuel Mateer: "....the necessary results of education and civilization are a feeling of self-worthiness and yearning after independent thought and action".[8] This feeling helped them to develop their feeling of individuality and get rid of their feeling of inferiority. The educational work of the missionaries had also a levelling effect upon society. The government disregarded the lower sections of society and it was the missionaries who kept the balance. They drew the attention of the government to the education of the lower classes through their repeated requests. Though only a section of the depressed classes joined the Christian Church, the influence of education equally affected them all. It was the most important single factor responsible for reshaping the stratified thought pattern of the people in the state. Dormant hopes of social justice were aroused in their hearts with the spread of education. When the Brahmin children for the first time in Travancore sat side by side in a class room with outcaste children, the Christian schools achieved a social goal beyond the wildest dreams of the Travancore Government.

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[8] Samuel Mateer, "Hindu Caste and Its Practical Operation", *I. E. R.*, vol. IX, (October, 1882), p. 217

For the great majority of the people in Travancore during the nineteenth century oppression was synonymous with the Hindu caste system and Christianity was the major liberating force. Liberation of those who suffered under the oppression of the caste structure meant freedom - intellectual, social, religious and economic - which the people had never enjoyed under the Hindu social set - up. At the bottom of the feudal social pyramid of Travancore were the slaves. It was the missionaries who exposed the evils of slavery through their writings and roused the conscience of all sections of society. Their memorandum submitted to the Raja of Travancore in 1847 formed the basis for a series of changes in the lives of slaves. Schools were started by the missionaries for their education and enlightenment. The caste Hindus were constantly reminded of their fraternal duty toward the slaves. Against bitter opposition the missionaries carried on their activities for the uplift of slaves.

After the abolition of slavery they directed their attention to the civil disabilities from which the lower castes as a whole suffered. The work of the missionaries bore

rich fruit and most of the disabilities were removed. Educational institutions were thrown open to all classes of students and special facilities were provided for the spread of education among the backward communities. The lower classes were also granted freedom to use the public roads and markets, and access to public offices. Socially and politically they took a great leap forward by turning Christians. They were more interested in their advancement as citizens than in being considered as mere Christians.

The most far - reaching consequence of the Christian movement in this period was the work carried out by the wives of the missionaries among women which symbolized a Christian revolution in the status of women. They found that education was the best means to raise them from their degradation. So schools were started for them. Education made them conscious of their rights and privileges. For the first time in the history of Travancore they began to dress decently, use the public roads, and break the established customs and practices to their advantage. The success of the upper - cloth revolt removed from among the caste Hindus much of their prejudice. The spread of female education was so rapid that by the end of the nineteenth century, Travancore stood first in this field among the native states in India. The missionary work considerably improved the status of women in society.

Churches became centres of social revolutionary movements. They were against the old social order of Hinduism, which looked down upon the outcastes and ill - treated them. An intellectual revolution was beginning to dawn. The Church strengthened the sense of community consciousness. This awareness inspired them to raise their social aims. This consciousness had a covert influence among the non - Christians in the last decades of the nineteenth century and many of the lower castes began a concerted move for securing social rights.[9] Dominant castes also approached the government for the removal of their disabilities.[10] A direct result of the Mission activity was a new movement started within Hindu society for the revival of Hinduism. The Kerala Hindu Mission was established with a view to the 'spread of Hindu Dharma' and 'to the elevation of backward classes'. Thus the missionary work also opened the eyes of the caste Hindus to the condition of the depressed classes.

The missionaries wanted to do away with caste distinctions, the hotbed of all socio-economic evils in Travancore which even plagued the Christian churches. They taught that all are equal in Christ and introduced the system of social meetings in order to strike at the caste demon at the grass-root level in the churches. But in spite of all the work of the missionaries this demon has still not been exorcized from the church. It is true that 'caste dharma' was weakened, but caste system as such continued. The creation of a new Protestant community, drawn from several under-privileged castes, was a new social factor which came to be designated as the S. I. U. C community, just like the Syrian Christian community. Though the missionaries were unsuccessful in making the people disregard the caste distinctions, they were able to present a creative and dynamic view of man as opposed to the earlier animistic concept. This caused a shift in emphasis from society to individual, which later influenced the progress of society. However the problem of caste remains a problem even to this day.

The lagacy left by the Travancore Mission of the L. M. S in other fields, was also of inestimable value to

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[9] *L. M. S. Report, 1893*, p. 145

[10] T. K. Ravindran, *Asan and Social Revolution in Kerala*, p. IV

the progress of Travancore. They encouraged the ancient arts of Travancore like *kalari* (the art of local fighting) and *varmam* (indigenous study of physiology). Although they introduced English medicine through their Medical Mission, they gave adequate importance to the indigenous systems of medicine like Ayurveda and Siddha. Games and competitions, excursions and picnics, conducted under the leadership of the church, helped to develop a sense of beauty and individuality among the Christians. Arts like calligraphy, printing, and photography received patronage from the missionaries. Western music was first introduced through symphonic church services. The harmonious choirs formed by them in their churches to increase the solemnity of worship still attract many who care to listen to the subtle strains. The translation of English hymns and lyrics into the local dialects, enriched the vernaculars. Musical instruments like the piano, the violin, and the organ, were first brought into Travancore by the missionaries. They established libraries connected with churches, which became centres for the diffusion of knowledge. Industries such as lace and embroidery became media of aesthetic expression and pecuniary gain to the Christians. The missionaries also influenced the art of house-building, furniture-making and interior decoration. But their contribution to the art of building churches was comparatively of little value. They brought within the reach of people coffee, tea, and rubber estates, and taught them scientific ways of cultivation. New agricultural implements were also introduced by the missionaries in Travancore. They kindled the spirit of philanthropy, benevolence and social service in the minds of their followers. The state was awakened to a new life and new possibilities. Through their efforts Christians secured the required freedom to live the new and dignified life. But one outstanding truth remains; Christians freed from the traditions of Hinduism were more interested in social and economic progress than in acquiring a deeper understanding of the Christian faith.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

PROCLAMATION OF THE RANI OF TRAVANCORE, 3 FEBRUARY 1829

Whereas some disturbances have taken place in the Kalcolam Yeraniel, and Velavancode districts between the Shanars and Nairs originating in a pretension of the women of the Shanars to wear the upper cloth contrary to orders and ancient customs, and in a refusal of that caste to perform the Sirkar oolium work required of them in common with other inhabitants, I deem it proper to publish the following Proclamation:

First, As it is not reasonable on the part of the Shanar women to wear clothes over their breasts, such custom being prohibited, they are required to abstain in future from covering the upper part of their body. An order (circular) had been issued on the 7th Edavam 989 to all places prohibiting the Shanar women of the families of such Shanars as may have embraced Christianity from wearing clothes over their breasts, and requiring them to substitute for these the kuppayam but with regard to their (the Shanars') allegation as an authority for wearing clothes over their breasts that a decree had been passed subsequently by a Law Court permitting the Shanar women on the contrary the use of clothes on the upper part of their body such a decision since if it be admitted as establishing a rule, it would be in direct contravention of the order alluded to, cannot but be considered as invalid. Therefore the order referred to is hereby republished to be held as a document (or authority) in this respect.

Secondly, The Shanars and all connected with them who might have embraced Christianity are without exception required to perform oolium duties in common with the rest of the inhabitants. It is however commanded that Christians of whatever denomination shall not be required to perform duties on Sundays nor caused to render any service appertaining to the Devasam and Thingul.

Thirdly, The inhabitants of our country are permitted without opposition to embrace whatever religion they may be inclined to adopt, however, Christian of whatever denomination and all the individuals are not permitted to act towards persons of higher castes contrary to the usages of their own castes before they become Christians. It is hoped that honest persons of all classes will avoid every dispute in regard to religion. Moreover as the Christian religion is one which inculcates humility and obedience to superiors, it is expected that those who have truly embraced that religion will behave themselves as properly as other well disposed people without opposition to the existing rules and customs.

Fourthly, But while we are thus ready to afford to all Our subjects without distinction every facility to follow their respective religion and to celebrate rites of the same in a regular manner we cannot allow our people of whatever caste or sect to erect pagodas, churches, chapels and schools mosques or other places of worship *without regular permission* on the application of the parties through the Sirkar officers; when all such applications will be duly considered and such spots fixed on as shall not occasion inconvenience to other castes.

Fifthly, As it appears of late certain Shanars and others of the same caste who have embraced Christianity proving refractory to the Sirkar authorities, make it a practice to prefer their complaints irregularly elsewhere. It is now notified that as there are no other tribunals in this country besides those appointed by us, whenever any person or persons of whatever caste and religion may have any just grievances or complaints to be represented they shall prefer the same to the Sirkar officers, whose duty it will then be to afford the parties redress, and in the event of such grievance or complaint not being redressed by those officers, the parties shall prefer the same to the courts, and eventually, if necessary to ourself since the tribunals are bound to treat all the inhabitants alike.

Sixthly, If any of the Sirkar officers oppress or otherwise ill-treat any inhabitant, the matter will be heard and redressed by the Courts and Ourself, and should it be established in the course of investigation that the Sirkar officers have been guilty of any irregularity or injustice, they will be duly visited with punishment, and declared unworthy of holding any public appointments.

Seventhly, As all persons having complaints will perceive from the promises hereof which are the tribunal or tribunals, to whom they shall have recourse for the hearing and settlement of their complaints, persons committing outrages (on the plea of ill-treatment or oppression) shall be punished adequately to the nature of their offences, because no clemency can be exercised towards persons disturbing the peace of the country.

The above shall be duly noted and acted up to by all persons.

Neettu vol. 20, pp. 48-50

APPENDIX II

THE PETITION OF BRITISH MISSIONARIES TO THE RAJA OF TRAVANCORE,

19 MARCH 1847

The Petition of the British Missionaries in Travancore to His Highness the Rajah.

May it please your Highness.

"We the undersigned Missionaries from Great Britain, engaged in promoting the welfare of your Highness on the occasion of the death of His Highness the late Rajah and to offer our congratulation on your succeeding the Government of this fine country and to express our hope that your Highness' Government will become illustrious by reason of the numerous benefits conferred upon the people.

"Your Highness' extensive intercourse with the people around and consequent familiarity with their condition, beyond what usually falls under the observation of those in eminent situation induces the hope that, the acquaintance has given rise to wise and kind thought for the oppressed among your subjects.

"While we duly appreciate the benevolent efforts of His Highness the late Rajah for the improvement of the condition of the people, there is a large and interesting class viz., the slave population invaluable for its services in the cultivation of the country and the chief producers of its food who appear to have been left to give your Highness the opportunity of conferring a benefit wider in its operation and more beneficial in its character than any which has yet been conferred on Travancore. For the emancipation of this class, we, though foreigners, beg to plead sanguine that Your Highness will rejoice at the opportunity of commencing your Government with so great an act of humanity and kindness. By the census of 1836 the poulation of Travancore was 1,280,668. Of these there were

Parayar	38,625	entered as "soil slaves"
Pulayar	90,598	
Coraivar	31,891	
Pallar	3,750	

In all 164,864 slaves, not to mention 16,226 Malay vaylar and other hill tribes, many of them are in a state of vassalage.

(i) "With the condition of the slaves we have had many opportunities of becoming acquainted and have been distressed to find, in reference to these people, employed in the most laborious and unhealthy service, that even when hardest wrought, their food is barely adequate to their sustenance – their clothing miserably scanty, their dwellings affording but little shelter from the moisture and cold surrounding them; and that generally no provision is made for their support when their labour is not required or disease or age render them unable to labour – that no medical aid is provided for them when ill – that they can be and are bought and sold as cattle and that in the heartless traffic the husband and wife, the parent and child can by rudely separated and sold in different directions:- that they are often subject to very cruel treatment from their masters, and that owing to their degradation, they are in a great measure deprived of the benefits of law courts and entirely cut off from all access to their prince.

'Of the above number we have no means of knowing how many are Sirkar slaves. Were not the degradation of all to complete, we should have solicited that a beginning might be made in the emancipation of those; but remembering their extreme misery, and knowing that the British Government has abolished slavery throughout its territories, and recently extended this merciful arrangement to India and other states are initiating the example; we venture to hope that your Highness will pass a law, in reference to the slave population of Travancore, similar to that passed by the Government of Bengal and now in operation with regard to slaves in the Honourable Company's territories, and thus perform an act of mercy to a numerous class of your subjects which will make your name precious in Travancore for generations to come as the reliever of the oppressed. We venture to submit to Your Highness that the history of slavery shows that it is the most costly labour that it depends the owners as much as the slave and that its extinction greatly conduces to the wealth, intelligence, and social comfort of man, wherever it has been achieved.

"Wishing Your Highness wisdom and energy to devise and execute measures which may promote the social weal and the mutual improvement of all your people.

We have the honour to be

March 19th 1847.

Your Highness' very obedient servants.

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APPENDIX III

PROCLAMATION OF THE RAJA ABOLISHING SLAVERY, SEPTEMBER 1853

Proclamation issued for all the people By His Highness Marthanda Varma Uttram Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore-1853

This is now hereby proclaimed after due consideration of the interest entertained for sometime past, that the condition of slaves in our state shall be improved as far as without any loss or hardship to the Kudiyans of Government.

1. The Government abandon the right over the children born of the 'Pandaravaka slaves' usually so called from the date of the declaration of this Proclamation.

2. Though the right over the slaves is abandoned as stated above, the slaves as well as all others should clearly understand that there shall be no change in the customs and untouchability in force according to the respective caste ettiquettes.

3. Hereafter no slave shall be allowed to be sold either for the execution of the decisions or orders of the Court [illegible]ollection of taxes or 'Pattom'.

4. Slaves shall own and enjoy property just like any other people and they shall not be robbed off such property by any one regarding it as belonging to the slaves.

5. Those who act anything against the slaves in any unjust manner shall be punishable under regulation VI of 1010 M.E. (1835). All people shall conduct themselves in conformity with this regulation.

6. Hereafter, if there are slaves attached to the properties without heirs and which are confiscated by Government because of escheat, such slaves shall be exempted from slavery without being added on as Government property.

7. Slaves shall not be separated without the consent of their parents and their children, and they shall not either be sold or entrusted to others living beyond 12 miles of their respective dwelling places.

8. Slaves employed by the Government shall be ordered to be paid wages equal to what is paid to the other workers.

9. If the slaves of the Government or of the Kudiyans become disabled for work because of old age or disease, they shall be given what is necessary for their livelihood so as to prevent their misery and suffering.

10. Till the slaves attain the age of 14, they shall not be employed to do any work not suited to their age.

11. As there shall be a definite Register relating to the children born of slaves after this date, the facts of births and deaths among slaves shall be let known by those concerned to the Tahsildars of 'Mandapathumvathukkals' (Taluks) through the Pravarthikara within 30 days.

If this rule is violated our Dewan has instructions to make offenders pay the prescribed penalty, to give them the necessary warning and to arrange for the maintenance of a Register.

(30 Kanny 1029 M. E.)

Cover File No.286

APPENDIX IV

REVISED PROCLAMATION ABOLISHING SLAVERY, 1855

Whereas we are anxious to better the condition of our slave population, and it is but just that they should have conceded to them these advantages, which are enjoyed by the same class of subjects in the extensive territories of the Honourable East India Company, and whereas it appears that Our Proclamation No. 32 of the 30th Cunny 1029 has not fully accomplished that object, we therefore deem it right to rescined the same to proclaim.

1st That from, and after the date of this proclamation all those who are included in the denomination of Sirkar slaves shall be considered free as well as their posterity the tax hitherto leviable on them being hereby abolished.

2rd That all slaves who may hereafter become the property of the Sirkar by the escheat of Estates without heirs, shall also be free.

3rd That no public office shall, in execution of any decree or order of the Court or for the enforcement of any demand of Rent or Revenue, sell or caused to be sold, any person, on the ground that such person is in a state of slavery.

4th That no right arising out of an alleged property in the person and services of any individual as a slave, shall be enforced by any Civil or Criminial Court or Magistrate within this territory.

5th That no person who may have acquired property by his own industry, or by the exercise of any art, calling or profession, or by inheritance assignment, gift or bequest, shall be dispossessed of such property or prevented from taking possession thereof, on the ground that such person, or that the person from whom the property may have been derived was a slave.

6th That any act which would be a penal offence if done to a free man shall be equally an offence it done to any person on the pretext of his being in a condition of slavery.

Cover File No. 286

APPENDIX V

PETITION OF THE MISSIONARIES TO THE GOVERNOR-IN-COUNCIL,

26 JULY 1855

To

The Rt. Hon'ble the Governor-in-Council,
Fort Saint George,
Madras

The Respectful Petition of the undersigned
Missionaries of the London Missionary
Society in Travancore

Respectfully Sheweth,

That petitioners have been resident in Travancore and employed as Missionaries of the London Missionary Society for periods of various length, from 17 years and downwards, and that by being located in several parts of the country from Cape Comorin to Quilon and by extensive intercourse in prosecution of their work, with all classes of the people throughout the above extent of country, they have acquired a very intimate acquaintance with the state of the country and the inhabitants of Travancore.

2. That petitioners on first coming to the country, applied for and obtained leave to reside in it, for the purpose of carrying on the work of Christian Missionaries, and that the Travancore Government, having formerly proclaimed the principle of full toleration alike to the professors of every faith, has in theory, maintained that principle unchanged up to the present day. That, until of late years, when any grievance obliged native converts to seek redress, it was readily obtained by application to the Dewan, or appeal to the British Resident for the time being.

3. But that, owing to the maladministration of the affairs of the Travancore Government oppressions and extortions of the grossest kind have of late years so much multiplied, - while redress can rarely be obtained - as not only to entail on the people poverty and misery, but also greatly to impede the work of petitioners as Christian Missionaries.

4. Moreover the evils at present existing in Travancore are of no ordinary character, nor in any way limited in their extent. The universal licence which all classes of the Sircar officers have now obtained in crime and injustice, and the consequent evils which are frequently witnessed by petitions have become so enormous, that they dare not any longer stand by in guilty silence, while their fellow men are thus suffering. Moreover as these evils extend to all classes of the community, it would be impossible for petitioners to convey an adequate idea of them by stating those only which affect those of the people who profess Christianity. Petitioners are therefore compelled in order to do justice to the subject to extend their remarks so as to expose these evils at large in their causes, ramifications and effects.

5. And when petitioners can ofcourse assure your Lordship [as will hereafter appear in this petition] that

repeated efforts have been made in the appointed manner by the parties aggrieved to obtain redress from the native and British authorities in Travancore, and that the result of these efforts has been nothing but an extension of the sufferings of the complainants on the one hand, and of the power of their oppressors on the other; - the most serious cases being treated by the British Resident as unimportant, and attempts made to cast odium on appealing parties as being dissatisfied and troublesome. Petitioners entertain confidence in your Lordship that in their present appeal they will not only be held as justified, but be regarded as discharging a duty rendered so imperative by the circumstances, that petitioners as British subjects, jealous for the honor of their country's name, as men, and as Christians could not, without guilt before God and man, as men, and as Christians could not, shrink from discharging.

6. Petitioners therefore, with every confidence in the well known desire of your Lordship to enforce justice and diffuse happiness, respectfully present the following matters for the consideration of your Lordship in Council.

It is universally admitted that the well - being of a people greatly depends on the manner in which the police is administered -

In regard to the present administration of the police in Travancore, it is not enough to say that it is neglected or disorganized, it is thoroughly perverted into an engine for iniquity, and that to so great an extent, and with such a knowledge of the highest authorities, native and European, that petitioners feel convinced that your Lordship has been hitherto kept in the dark, and that the facts have but to be mentioned to ensure a speedy and effectual removal of existing evils.

1. About 30 persons, against whom charges have been made, and whose cases have undergone some investigation in the Zillah and Circuit Courts, are at this present time lying in the jail at Trivandrum, having been confined for periods of time, varying from one to five years, without a final sentence having been passed on them, and still waiting their trial in the Appeal Court.

2. Others had been in confinement for periods as long, and afterwards, when their cases were disposed of in the month of Maida 1030/ April/May 1855/ some were acquitted; the sentence acquitting them proving that they, though innocent, suffered five years false imprisonment.

3. Others again, without any specific charge made against them, are imprisoned solely by the arbitrary order of the Dewan and other officials. And others are sent in from the districts, without any proof against them, to the jail in Trivandrum; and once cast into prison by either of these illegal means, there they remain at the will of their persecutors, it may be to perish, sometimes from the effects of torture, sometimes from the slow, but sure, process of distress, confinement and oppression - none to relieve - no door open to their cry against iniquity to reach the ear of justice. The jailor reports to the Court. The Court to show reason for their cases lying over, remarks that they are in prison by the Dewan's order, but that the witnesses and proofs not being forthcoming, they cannot dispose of the cases.

And petitioners entreat the most particular attention to the fact that the monthly and other accounts of prisoners under confinement are received by the British Resident who has thus become cognizant of this state of things which nevertheless still continues.

4. There are other cases of everyday occurrence in which, without summons or warrant, persons, sometimes

with, sometimes without, charges made against them, are seized sometimes with violence, and thrown into the District Thannahs, at the malice or caprice of any low official, or of someone who can secure their co-operation, and these detained in the stocks, with attendant circumstances of barbarity, for many days, without any investigation whatever. They are sometimes brought out for a while, only to be tortured, and threatened, and again thrust into the Thannah. The cases are sometimes not at all noticed by the District police officer, nor carried beyond the Thannah Naick. Sometimes also, after the parties have suffered many days imprisonment, and gone through a pretence of investigation, instead being sent under report to the Zillah Courts they are still retained in confinement beyond the six days fixed in the regulations. And after having been subjected to whatever ill-treatment their persecutors choose to inflict on them, they are dismissed as arbitrarily as they were seized. Complaints and appeals to the higher authorities are either wholly unheeded, or sent back to persons complained against, only to excite their malice the more; and these tyrants oppress at pleasure without any fear of punishment following their crimes.

5. Should the authorities in Travancore reply, as probably they may, that such things cannot be, because the regulations do not admit of them, this would be a mere subterfuge, for those regulations are systematically set aside, not only in the Courts, but in the districts throughout the country, and assault, false imprisonment and torture are commonly perpetrated at the will of the authorities; while appeals to the Resident are almost sure to result in the petitioner for British Protection being referred to the Dewan, who not only himself practices such atrocities, but uniformly shields his subordinates, when accused of similar practices. In such a state of evils a personal picque, desire for some of the wealth of a rich man, intention to compel

acquiescence in some unjust demand, or any other wicked motive, is enough, and the victim is consigned to prison by an arbitrary word, and the authorities who commit the injustice, and those who abet it, are alike secure from punishment.

Petitioners cannot but contrast this state of enormous evils existing in Travancore under the present administration with the police arrangement in the provinces of the Hon'ble Company where proof against a confined person must be produced within two days, or sufficient reason assigned for his further detention. Or even with the regulations in Travancore, which require minor cases to be disposed of within days as the District police and heinous cases to be reported to the Zillah Court within six days.

And they assure your Lordship that the records of the Courts, reports of the Thannah Naicks, and District police, as well as much other evidence both oral and documentary will fully prove the truth of the above operations.

6. In connexion with the above universal licence to imprison to any extent, and for any protracted periods, should be remembered that there is no allowance of food made to those confined in the Thannahs and that frequent recourse is had to torture by all the officials, from the Dewan downwards, not only on suspected or accused persons, but also on witnesses, in order to pervert their testimony according to the wishes of any corrupt person. It is only by a connected view of the many complicated parts of the powerful engine for unlimited iniquity into which the police in Travancore is converted that an adequate conception can be formed of the enormity of the evils of which petitioners now complain.

7. While the above facts will show the illegal severity inflicted on the innocent, the facility afforded to the guilty

to escape punishment presents another and most injurious feature in the present state of the police. Men, who not only stand charged with heinous crimes, but against whom strong presumptive proof has been produced, are frequently allowed to remain at large, without any efforts being made to seize them. And others who have been seized, and against whom a case has been substantiated with sufficient clearness to demand their close confinement, are let out either on bail, or without any check, and allowed openly to engage afresh in robbery and violence, to intimidate the witnesses brought against them, and to inspire terror throughout the neighbourhood where they are at large, simply because they are able to bribe or influence the officials.

8 At the same time, the real complaints of those who do not employ bribery or other dishonest influence to promote their cause are quite disregarded and often at once thrown back to the complainant, without any reason assigned; or if received at all and the opposite party can command improper influence, the result is that the innocent sufferer who complains is treated as a criminal, while the real offender becomes his triumphant accuser.

9. Another great grievance is, that if persons, who have been robbed, after detecting the robbers, and tracing out the property, make their complaint to the police, they find that it is only to impoverish themselves the more, and enrich the police officers; since these not only receive bribes to let off the robbers, but often retain the stolen property also as a prize to themselves.

10. Cases of complaint against Sircar officials require special notice, as in these, their office is almost always used to secure them, not only from punishment, but also from enquiry. And especially, if the complainant belong to that large portion of the inhabitants, who, being lower than Soodras, are excluded from office on account of their caste, the party associations existing between those in office

are all employed to procure false evidence, by which, however guilty, they obtain acquittal, and the suffering and innocent complainants are condemned as the only guilty persons.

II. Further to show how greatly the above evils are aggravated, and how hopeless are all local efforts to seek for redress, petitioners beg to call your Lordship's attention to the character of some of those now holding appointments, not only as Heads of the Districts, but also in offices of the Central Courts.

1. Without any apparent consideration beyond those affecting his own private interests, the Dewan has lately appointed to some of the most responsible offices criminals formerly convicted of heinous crimes and who not only suffered severe and degrading punishments at the time, but were also sentenced to be for ever ineligible for Sircar employ.

2. Another class of cases will show that others have been appointed, within the present year, whose incompetency for the offices they hold is so glaring and notorious as to make their employment an absurdity, and their filling the place in which able men are wanted causes a stagnation of business, and affords an additional opportunity for the prevalence of corruption. In some instances new offices with large salaries have been lately created, and filled with such men; thus squandering the resources of an exchequer already on the verge of bankruptey, and further burdening a people already oppressed beyond their power of endurance.

3. In this connexion, petitioners may be allowed to refer to the means of obtaining office as the chief cause of corrupt and incompetent men being crowded into the various departments of the State. It may be confidently

asserted that every appointment has its price, and unless that be paid, the most deserving cannot obtain it, while by its payment, candidates for office of the worst character and, in direct violation of recorded sentences and standing rules, are at once successful.

4. It will naturally follow that office, so obtained, and by such men, is abused in the most iniquitous manner, to extort bribes, pervert justice, oppress the weak, shield the guilty, promote favourites, and amass large private fortunes. These and other evils, in the extent to which they exist in Travancore, to be properly known, must be traced out in the lamentations of many, a ruined and exhausted supplicant in Travancore itself, and in the numerous memorials forwarded to the Madras Government.

5. The lower officers in the districts, viz: Moonalikars, Sermanakars, Tundalkars, Peons etc, who are constantly residing in the same place, and guilty of an immense amount of petty oppression in their several Districts, abusing the peculiar opportunities which, from their local residence and influence, they possess, to maltreat and plunder the people as they please, well knowing, that they will not be punished, and that all efforts to call them to account, will only recoil on the complainant.

6. The irregularity in paying the servants of the Sircar, or rather the constant practice of keeping them out of their pay for many months after it is due/and which not withstanding any assertions or reports to the contrary that may have reached your Lordship, your petitioners beg to assure your Lordship, is continued to the present day/ is the cause of great oppression to the inhabitants of the country. The great extent of the evils arising from this injustice of the Sircar, will appear by the following exposure of the system of extortion which now generally prevails.

The wages of the Sircar servants are many months in arrears, and, to provide for their current expenses, they demand loans and advances from the people, under promise to pay when their wages are received. After many months' delay, there is an issue of some part of wages in arrears. But many of the servants to receive it, are collectors of money for the Sircar, and large deductions are now made, not only for money actually collected and due by them to the Sircar, but for the amount of taxes which, though still entered in the Sircar account as due, is, on account of being charges on abandoned or unproductive land, properly remitted. This amount being compulsorily deducted from the inadequate and long-postponed pay of the Sircar servants, impels them to refuse the repayment of the money they have already obtained from the people, and to extort still further sums, and thus the oppressed ryots of the country are laid under a constant process of grinding extortion to contribute , towards paying the Sircar servants, and supplying the enormous deficiency in the public revenue.

III. Not withstanding the enormity of the evils inflicted on the people by the state of the police, and the character of the Sircar officials, as now shown some alleviation atleast might be hoped for if the state of the higher courts were such as to afford redress to those who appeal against oppression. But the bane of the present administration has reached to them also and great pains have been taken by the controlling authorities to remove everyone who dares to maintain the claims of justice against their unrighteous proceedings.

1. In proof of this particular charge, nothing more is needed than a history of the means employed to remove Mr. Kohlhoff from the Appeal Court, and a reference to the character and competency of most of the present officers of that Court.

2. The salt monopoly is mismanaged in such a manner, as greatly to distress the consumer by enormously raising the prices to enrich the officers of that department by affording them many opportunities to embezzle, and to defraud the Sircar to a large amount. Large sums due from the Sircar to individuals on the salt account remain long in arrears. The salt, instead of being stored away in godowns, is left in heaps out of doors, at the place of making it, covered only slightly with a little earth:- and, owing to the high price at which the Government salt is sold, and the imperfect manner in which these heaps are guarded, the poor inhabitants are tempted habitually to steal the salt, and sell it much cheaper than the Government. When enquiry is made concerning these practices, the whole blame is laid upon the poor people, and the Sircar officers are let loose upon them in a most oppressive and extortionate manner.

3. Similar evils attend the cardamom monopoly.

4 The evils arising from the tobacco monopoly, formerly by no means trifling, have increased since the abolition of the Hon'ble Company's monopoly; and in the prevalence of so much corruption and disorder in the Travancore Government, to the most alarming extend. The temptation of a very high profit, together with the facilities of bringing in the smuggled tobacco, both along the ranges of mountains and on the coast, have induced many of the people to organize themselves into bands of smugglers. The smugglers are well-armed and desperate encounters have frequently taken place between them and the police authorities, when many are wounded and killed. At the times when the Sircar make especial efforts to suppress smuggling, these smugglers become house breakers and high way robbers, and carry terror and ruin through the neighbouring places.

5. The efforts made by the Sircar to remedy these evils, like all its other acts, result only in producing greater. The District authorities league themselves with the smugglers,

sharing in their profits, and screening them from punishment. At the same time, oppression and extortion in various ways are practised on the innocent inhabitants. The sale of the Sircar tobacco having greatly fallen off, the authorities are trying to force sales on the people, by visiting them in their houses. While petitioners are writing this petition, Shungoony Menon, Police Sheristadar, is going through the Districts from Trivandrum northwards, on this mission, and information has just been received that he is torturing the people in the most barbarous manner, and that a great number of petitions had been sent in against him.

Thus the Sircar monopolies, as at present carried on, greatly impoverish the people, without increasing the revenue, and demoralize and oppress large numbers of the inhabitants.

VI. Your petitioners feel themselves incapable of giving an adequate idea of the general state to which the country has been reduced under the present Government, without appearing to exaggerate; but while they most confidently assert, that the result of a proper enquiry would expose an amount of evil far more than they can now describe, they respectfully submit the following sketch.

1. The periodical survey and assessment of lands was wholly omitted at the last return of the period, and the registration which ought to have immediately followed the survey which took place about sixteen years ago is not yet complete. Also the transfer of lands from one person to another is not properly entered and secured. Thus a most prolific source of dispute, litigation, and vexatious interference of Sircar officers and other spoliators.

2. It is evident, from a variety of circumstances, that the revenue is constantly on the decrease, and hence numerous evils are entailed on all classes of the people. But petitioners have reason to believe, that the real state of the revenue is

studiously concealed from the Madras Government, by the mode in which the accounts are managed, not to say decidedly falsified.

3. The deficiencies and disorders in the Revenue Department are so great, and the authorities feel themselves to be so inextricably involved, that Peishgars and others are frequently withdrawn from their proper duties in the cutcherries to scour the country for money, and thus the business of the cutcherries stagnates, to the great injury of many persons. There not being sufficient staff of officers to attend to the numerous festivals, and the business connected with them, officials of all grades, from the Dewan to the lowest, frequently suspend their judicial or police duties to attend to the collection of vegetable and other supplies required in these occasions. And the delay in business thus produced, not only distress the parties who have cases in the Courts, but give opportunities for the working of bribery, intimidation, and cunning.

4. Licenced oppressors, with the countenance of the high authorities, are let loose on the people, in all parts of the country - bribery is all influential - justice unknown - complaints of the poor neglected - unjust demands of the rich carried out to the extreme - true witness condemned as false - false witnesses knowingly and systematically received as true - real sufferers, when appealing to the Dewan's cutcherry for redress, if poor, not only unheard, but too often imprisoned and ruined, while the Dewan, and those in league with him, or in the favour of others in power, amass riches without limit, and commit crime without fear. Among the uninfluential and the poor, neither property, nor personal liberty, nor life itself, is safe, but all exposed to an unrestrained and merciless tyranny.

5. In short, this province of Travancore, which, under good management, is capable of becoming a fine country, yielding prosperity to the inhabitants, and a good revenue to its rulers, and which, under former administrations, has been

far more prosperous than at present, is now bordering on utter disorganization and ruin, and in this state of things, the sufferers are the great mass of the people.

To understand the extent of their suffering, no enquiries by means of the local authorities will avail; for they only strive to conceal the truth. It is requisite that able and honest men should thoroughly examine into each department, with all its branches, unravel the confuted mass of so called accounts which they would find, and trace out the real state of affairs, guarding against the numerous devices made to mislead, and following on till they detect the influence of the chief authorities acting throughout as the motive power, and they would then find that the entire fabric of the present Travancore Government is a vast and complicated piece of machinery for misrule and oppression. And petitioners know, from your Lordship's former course of administration, and recent acts, that your Lordship's Government, having ascertained that the state of affairs is such, would at once adopt measures to remove these evils, or at least greatly mitigate them.

6. Petitioners are convinced, that your Lordship would have interfered with decision long ere this, but that whatever enquiries may have been made from Madras to the authorities in Travancore, the reports made in reply, have failed to present the real state of affairs to your Lordship, and that a disclosure of facts will justify petitioners in the strongest expressions which they have used.

7. Several of petitioners have at various times appealed in the most urgent manner both to the Dewan and the British Resident, but they have the replies of those authorities as well as other evidence, to prove that all such efforts are in vain; for the Resident, appears to do nothing but refer to the Dewan all cases brought to his notice, relying implicitly on all the reports he may make, even when opposed

to all the evidence brought before him by Europeans and others; and the Dewan is thus enabled to screen his own conduct, and to support, in the practice of injustice, those corrupt officials who have obtained his favour, often recriminating on the complainants, laying the blame on those to whom it is not due, and by other misrepresentations, conversing his real proceedings by a fair show of reply.

8. Petitioners therefore are compelled, by the force of evidence before them, to assure your Lordship, that nothing but procrastination of justice, and a longer lease in iniquity to the corrupt officials of Travancore will be the result of this petition be referred for disposal to the authorities in the country.

9. While many of petitioners' statement have been necessarily general, they are ready to support by evidence every assertion they have made, and they feel as men, as British subjects, anxious for the honor of their country's name, and as Christian Ministers, that they have such peculiar claims for a full enquiry into the state of Travancore, as will commend themselves to your Lordship's approval.

10. Petitioners, therefore, most respectfully, yet earnestly, pray for the appointment of a Commission of well qualified Europeans with full powers, first, to secure the records in the Courts and Cutcherries, and then to enquire into the whole of the affairs of the Travancore Government, and petitioners will be prepared, whenever such a Commission shall be appointed, to bring forward abundant proof, by oral and documentary evidence, and by witnesses, both Native and European, well acquainted with the matters of enquiry.

And your petitioners will ever pray

(Signed) James Russel
,, John Cox
,, Ebenezer Lewis
,, John Owen Whitehouse
,, Frederick Baylis

Nagercoil,
July 26th, 1855.

For. Pol. Cons, 28 December 1855, Nos. 276-84, pp. 55-84

APPENDIX VI

THE PETITION OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE L.M.S TO THE RAJA OF TRAVANCORE, 7 FEBRUARY 1859

The respectful petition of the Missionaries of the London Missionary Society, stationed in South Travancore, to His Highness the Rajah of Travancore. May it please your Highness,

1. We, the undersigned Missionaries of the London Missionary Society stationed in South Travancore, take the liberty of addressing your Highness on the present disturbed state of the districts in which we severally reside, and beg to inform your Highness;-

2. That, for the last few weeks the Christian converts under our care have been subject to much molestation, chiefly from men of the Soodra caste; that many of them, women as well as men, have been beaten, their cloths torn off, and other indignities shown to them; that our catechists and school masters especially have been ill-treated being still seized, bound, beaten and imprisoned, their houses plundered and burned, and their families obliged to leave their homes and seek protection where they can; that many of our congregations are now unable to meet on Sabbath days, according to the usages of our holy religion, and worship had in our usual manner, as some of their spiritual teachers, are in prison, others concealing themselves from their pursuers, and others have left the Country, and that some of our schools also are broken up for similar reasons.

3. That the Soodras, in their lawless proceedings as above mentioned, are not only encouraged and abetted by some of the lower grades of Government officials, as we can prove by facts, but that these officials themselves are the chief instigators and perpetrators. Of the above mentioned wrongs and indignities; that they plead authority from your Highness for what - they are thus doing, and either misunderstand or wilfully misrepresent the proclamation of Her Majesty, the Queen, as though for the future all protection were withdrawn from European Missionaries and their converts, and such Missionaries prohibited from carrying on their work; and that they openly avow that their object in all this is to destroy the Christian cause in Travancore and restore society to that state in which it existed previous to the year 1809.

4. That we, the Missionaries, are also the object of intense hatred to the Government officials above mentioned; that we cannot venture, during the present commotions, to visit our congregations and schools in some parts of our respective

districts; that our lives are menaced and our dwellings threatened to be destroyed by fire; that our families, in consequence, are kept in a constant state of alarm, and that not only as Missionaries but as Europeans also we are openly reviled and held up to contempt by the Government officials aforesaid at the police stations; and other Sircar offices.

5. That we beg to remind your Highness that such a state of disorder, violence, and suffering has not existed during any previous period of your Highness's reign; that the present violent opposition made to Christianity and its professors is in direct contrariety to the religious liberty conceded to all classes of your Highness's subjects by previous proclamations; that the Christian part of the community have not been known at any time to use violence to any Hindoo sects as such, or interrupt them in the performance of their religious rites, but that on the contrary they have always been among the most orderly and best behaved of your Highness's subjects, and are yearly becoming more intelligent, industrious and prosperous, and therefore contributing more than any other class to the prosperity of your Highness.

6. That as far we are able to ascertain, the origin of the present disturbances is to be traced to the dissatisfaction of the landed proprietors at the emancipation of their slaves, announced by proclamation in the year 1855; that finding it impracticable to procure from the Government a repeal of that proclamation, their disappointment now demands some compensation for the loss of dignity connected with their social status which they imagine has been caused by the aforesaid proclamation; that the most practical method, and one conformable with the laws of Travancore, of repairing that loss which has suggested itself to their minds, is to restore in all their entirety social superiority and ancient domination over the "lower orders" that as this superiority is most patent in the style of dress to be adopted, the "highest

orders", including the above mentioned Sircar officials who all belong to these orders, have taken the law into their own hands, and are now compelling all classes below them to adopt the style of the dress prescribed to them by the ancient laws of the country, which cnosists, as your Highness is aware, of a single cloth of coarse texture, to be worn alike by males and females no lower than the knee and no higher than the waist.

7. That the style of dress just mentioned being incompatible with the modesty and decorum which the Christian religion inculcates and promotes, a former Resident of Travancore procured from the Government to all Christian women below the Soodra caste the liberty of wearing a jacket; that many Christian women have of late years (not from any opposition to the Government, but simply from the love of appearing decent in public) been in the habit of wearing also the upper cloth, some of whom are expert workers of "pillow lace"; specimens of which, worked with silver and gold thread, your Highness was pleased to order for the "Great Exhibition". of 1851, and which procured for the makers, a bronze medal; that the assumption of an upper cloth even by such women, all of whom have received a good education in our schools, and deserving as they would be deemed by all enlightened nations to wear it, has not been at any time encouraged by us, on account of its being known as contrary to the laws of the country, and that even now, at all our mission stations when advice is given on the subject, it is to the effect that it being discontinued; that the charge therefore preferred against us of aiding and abetting the converts in their opposition to the Government on this point is founded either on misapprehension or it will.

8. That the statement, now so often repeated, that "the Christian women have taught the heathen women to wear the upper cloth", will appear to your Highness to be incorrect, in as much as there are many rich heathen Shanar families

who have from time previous to the introduction of Protestant Christianity to this country been in the habit of wearing it, in as much also as hundreds of heathen families of the Shanar class, who annually spend half the year in Tinnevelly, where they are allowed without molestation to wear it, return for the remained of the year to the eastern and southern parts of Travancore, where they continue the same style of dress; that other women of the same class living in the numerous and scattered villages where these reside, have gradually followed their example, till at length it has become the rule and not the exception in those parts to wear it; and that therefore the custom of assuming the upper cloth by the heathen women of the Shanar class finds its origin among themselves, and not among the Christian converts of the same class.

9. That in reference to the present disturbance, we are of opinion that the Dewan is most anxious to suppress it, but that he is greatly thwarted by the lower grades of government officials, whom it seems he has not the power to dismiss at will; that whatever may be the extent of power in this respect with which the Dewan may be entrusted by your Highness for the conduct of public affairs in times of peace, we are of opinion that a temporary extension of his present powers is highly advisable for the speedy and effectual suppression of the present disturbance.

10. That we have therefore to entrust that your Highness will be pleased to grant the Dewan, with as little delay as possible, that increase of power which the present emergency calls for; that your Highness will further be pleased to signify, in a way to be understood by all, your disapproval of the manner in which the native Christian portion of your subjects are at present oppressed, plundered and imprisoned without just cause, by another portion of your subjects, including especially Athigaries and their subordinates; that your Highness will especially visit with

your displeasure every attempt made to keep our chapels closed, and to disturb the public worship of the Christians by peons apprehending them and their teachers during the hours of worship on Sabbath days; and finally, that your Highness will cause a due and strict observance by all the Government officials of the police regulations with regard to the arrest and subsequent treatment of those who are charged with offences against the law, and this, we beg to assure your Highness, will call forth still more abundantly the prayers of your Christian subjects on behalf of your Highness, to our Almighty Saviour, the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords".

We have &c.,

(Signed) James Russel
" John Abbs
" John Cox
" Ebenezer Lewis
" Frederick Baylis
" John Joll Dennis

Official Papers, pp. 38-42

APPENDIX VII

MEMORIAL OF THE MISSIONARIES TO SIR C. E. TREVELYAN, 18 JULY 1859

To

The Honorable Sir C. E. Trevelyan, K.C.B.,
Governor of Fort St. George in Council.

The respectful petition of the undersigned Missionaries of the London Missionary Society in Travancore

Respectfully Sheweth,

1. That petitioners are employed as Missionaries of the London Missionary Society in Travancore - some of them having been thus engaged for more than twenty years. That they have experienced, especially in later years, so many obstructions to improvements and have witnessed so many evils arising from the character of the Government and the practices of the Country, and have at the same time had so much practical evidence that there is no hope of obtaining redress from the authorities in Travancore that they are compelled to address the British Government. And they trust that the facts which they state in the petition will prove that they have full cause for this course.

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encouragement. But they do appeal to the Honorable the Governor in Council for some act to protect the property and lives of themselves and families when they are thus treated with neglect, not to say contempt, in the reply of the Rajah through the British Resident.

11. That there are peculiar difficulties experienced by petitioners and the Native Christians under their care, which can be appreciated only by taking into consideration the position which the Soodras hold in the Country and their relation to other castes. As a caste, they rank as the aristocracy of the Country; they have constant and peculiar access to the Rajah; they alone constitute His Highness Brigade; they monopolize most of the offices of Government and are in fact the mouth-piece and hands of the Sircar throughout the Country. Those of them not in office have generally relations there; and, if not, the caste feeling so universally prevails that, if a man be only a Soodra, he is sure to be regarded with favour by the officials. These evils are aggravated by all those of lower-caste being excluded, as such from office by the rules of Travancore. So that the feeling between those in *Office and not in Office* is necessarily one of strong antagonism; and by the order of things here, the parallelism equally applies to those of *high* and *low-caste*. In investigations, the Soodra is admitted as a brother of the ruling class; and, even though a culprit, he has easy access to his Judges; while the low-caste man (so-called) perhaps the victim of the Soodras's oppression and an applicant for justice, must stand at a distance outside the Court or office in an abject posture, and is regarded by those who ought to administer to him justice as an alien and a troublesome opponent of their clique. Thus, through all the various minutiae on which a case under investigation turns, the low-caste man has to contend against endless disadvantages.

12. That, in this state of things, petitioners have peculiar cause to seek the aid of the British Government on

behalf of the converts to Christianity, because, by the rules of Travancore which enforce intolerance under a profession of toleration, they are wholly excluded from obtaining an improved position in the polity. Though it is true that Syrian Christians have been allowed from time immemorial a favourable status, so as not to be excluded from the common rights of citizenship, yet converts to Christianity are now placed under great and unjust disadvantage. While a man of high-caste, on becoming a Christian, must sink to the condition of one who has lost caste, it was ruled by the late Dewan and supported by the British Resident that, if a man of low-caste, became a Christian, he must ever be considered as a man of low-caste, and of the same caste as before; and if that caste be one held as lower than the status assigned to the Community of Christians, which he enters, that he cannot be, during the whole of his life, eligible to the rights of that Community. It has never been satisfactorily shown that this rule has been abrogated; but, however that may be, in practice Christian converts from lower castes are constantly made to suffer disabilities as from such a rule. They are not only inadmissible to Government employ, even as common peons, while Mohammedans are admitted, but they are excluded from approach to the places of justice, and from some of the public high-roads, and obliged to use such terms of address and speech as they used when in their heathen condition.

13. The Native Christians, together with all others who are treated by the Travancore Government as people of low-caste are more than others exposed to the intrigues and injustice of the writers or Pillymars of the offices. These writers have to take down verbatim all depositions and by the *excluded* position in which those deemed low-caste are placed, they are entirely in the hands of the writers who can make them say that they please and even sign it afterwards as a genuine deposition, though it be greatly altered. The form of reading it over to the deponent is gone through, but

that gives no security to a man ignorant of letters, or to one who is not allowed to read over what is written in his names. In connection with this subject, the treatment of accused persons of the above-mentioned classes *before* trial requires serious attention. They are not unfrequently loaded with fetters and hand-cuffs, like convicted felons. And though Tahsildars and others thus treat them contrary to the regulations, and the sufferers are subsequently proved to be innocent, the disabilities, above shown to be entailed upon them as low-caste people, prevent them from obtaining redress; and the officials, though guilty of the grossest oppression and cruelty are free from punishment, notwithstanding the declaration in the Proclamation of (1004) 1829, that Sircar officials guilty of such conduct should be punished and considered unworthy of further employment; nor have the representations of Missionaries and others in reference to such officials generally met with any attention.

14. That Native Christians, while thus excluded themselves and suffering this injustice from the Soodras and other officials who, ensconced in their advantageous positions, regard them with antipathy, have no adequate provision by which they can obtain justice through others. The lower offices have no Christian officials. It is only in the five Zillah Courts and the Appeal Court that Christian Judges are allowed. And these, who are either Europeans or East Indians, are admitted only to subordinate places, and are so placed as to be out-numbered or over-influenced by Hindoos. Thus the Christians are entirely destitute of an adequate provision for obtaining impartial justice. And petitioners submit that these disabilities are not in accordance with the equal toleration of all religions which is professed by the Travancore Sircar.

15. That the serious nature of the disabilities which the Native Christians suffer will further appear by the law of

of Travancore, which still excludes converts to Christianity from inheriting the property of their Hindoo or Heathen ancestors. Connected with the laws of inheritance is another evil arising from the peculiar customs of the Malayalam people. By these, they are obliged to recognize as their heirs, not their own children, but those of their sisters. And the converts to Christianity, being still held bound by the rules of that caste in which they were born, as though they still continued to be Heathen, parental influence and right are nullified, and the Christians are exposed to the interposition of the authority of the maternal uncle of their children do deprive their children of property and even to withdraw them from their own parents and to prevent them from being received with them into the Christian Community.

16. That petitioners feel compelled also to bring to the notice of the Honorable the Governor in Council the subject of slavery. The extent and condition of slavery in Travancore and Cochin was brought to the notice of the British authorities so long ago as 1838 by Mr. T H. Baber of the Civil Service. And a Memorial on the subject signed by 13 Missionaries of the Church and London Societies was presented to the Rajah in 1847, soliciting the passing of a law similar to Act V of 1843 in Bengal. But the Rajah, through the British Resident, showed his disinclination to move on the subject. Another Memorial was addressed to the Rajah in 1848, referring to the Proclamation of the Governor General dated "On the Ganges, Off Monghyr, 2nd December 1847", classing slavery with infanticide and suttee, and declaring that any persons guilty of those crimes should be imprisoned and the whole of their property confiscated, and thanking by name all those Native Princes, who had entered into the views of the British Government in suppressing these cruel practices. But the Resident replied in the Rajah's name that he was decidedly averse to the entire abrogation of the existing

laws on the subject. Nevertheless the pressing representations from the British Government atlast induced the Rajah to issue a Proclamation, in 1853, and that not being found to be sufficient, for the pressure from the British Government extracted from the Rajah another in 1855 "for the amelioration of slavery". But the objects set forth in that Proclamation have not been effected. The influence and the schemes of the Soodra slave holders have rendered that Proclamation almost a dead letter. They have opportunities to display the irritation of their minds by such outrages as those of January last, but the good effects which the wording of the Proclamation would seem to promise are not realized. Such must be the failure of every word of promise in Travancore, however specious or well sounding, as long as so much licence is given to the selfish lawlessness of the Soodras. Petitioners beg also to refer to the monopolies of paper, salt, tobacco, etc., and the system of ooliam or forced labour, (as stated in sections 4th and 5th of Petition of Missionaries of the London Missionary Society to the Madras Government, July 26th, 1855) which still prevail and the cause of the numerous evils throughout the Country.

17. The petitioners feel themselves, as Christians and as men bound earnestly to solicit that the influence of the British Government be exerted in reference to the dress of the women in Travancore. The violent outbreaks of the Soodras's animosity in January last, peculiarly call on petitioners to plead for the Christian women. Far deficient as were the concessions made to them in the Proclamation of 1004 (1829) they have often been deprived even of these by the lawless assaults of the Soodras, so that they have not dared to appear decently clothed. And, if they sought redress in the Courts appointed for justice, they have to endure additional revilings and insults from the Soodras, who there fill the offices. And petitioners feel that they would not be acting as becomes their position as Ministers of the Gospel, and as Englishmen, if they confined themselves to the grievances of

Christian women alone, because women of the lower-castes, who have not become Christians, are prohibited by the standing laws of Travancore from covering their persons in any way whatever above the waist. Petitioners appeal with all their energy against this barbarism. The urgency of their appeal will be seen in the fact that some women have been sentenced within the present year by the Zillah Court of Palpanabhapuram (Nagercoil) to 4 months' imprisonment for no other alleged crime than that of wearing a cloth over the upper part of their bodies, and were sent to the Trivandrum Jail in execution of the sentence petitioners trust that the influence of the British Government will be exerted to induce the Rajah to issue a Proclamation giving permission to women of whatever caste to cover their persons in such manner as they please. The only objection to this measure, which has a show of force, is that such permission would lead to a confusion of castes. But to those who impartially judge of the real state of facts this objection will be seen to be without foundation, and there are some places in Travancore, where women of the so-called low-castes have from time immemorial worn the upper-cloth, and yet the upholders of caste have continued to flourish. What has been done in some places can be done in others also. That petitioners have lately seen the Government records containing a letter of the Dewan of Travancore to the Resident dated 17th May 1859, No. 895, in reference to a proposed Proclamation of the Rajah of Travancore in relation to the dress of the lower castes ,And petitioners cannot but submit that any Proclamation in accordance with that letter will be both deficient and objectionable, because the privilege proposed to be granted in it is confined to the women of the Shanar community, while the women of the Erluvar, Pariah, and some other castes, who number upwards of three hundred thousand (300,000) are left subject to the same barbarous and indecent restrictions as before, and because, on account of the ambiguity of the proposed Proclamation with respect to the kind of dress that may be adopted even by Shanar females, and from its betraying so great a deference to the pride and intolerance of the higher castes and fear of their discontent, it cannot but lead to so serious disturbances and complications in the future.

18. That it is not in the dress of the women only that barbarism is maintained by the rules and customs of Travancore. The mode of wearing the cloth and of dressing by the men, the wearing of sandals, the carrying of umbrellas, the mode of address, the terms used, the manner of carrying a pot of water, the kind of jewels allowed, the customs at marriages, the style of the houses, all such things, entering as they do into the everyday life of the people, are employed in Travancore by the upper-castes, and especially the Soodrass, to degrade and oppress those who are under them. And these, one and all, are obstacles to the mental and social improvement of the people, and to the prosperity of the Country.

19. That petitioners feel confident that the above statements will clearly show the necessity of their appealing to the British Government. And in addition to all that has been stated, petitioners submit that they have another reatson of the greatest force for their appeal in the treatment which their late petition to the Rajah through the British Resident has received at the hands of those authorities. Two and a quarter months elapsed without any notice being taken of it (sic). The entire absence of any expression of regret for, or of any reference whatever to, the annoyance, danger and contempt to which petitioners and their families were exposed; — The peculiar reticence maintained in reference to the cruelties inflicted by the Soodras on the Native Christians, women as well as men, the entire withholding of sympathy toward the women whose feelings of decorum have been so outraged, and the studied generality of the expressions of displeasure against those who act "adverse to the cause of order", thus made as applicable to the sufferers labouring under the misrepresentations of their high caste accusers who have access to the Rajah, as their

oppressors themselves, — all these show the present feeling of the authorities in Travancore and are calculated to excite the alarm of petitioners as to the treatment which here awaits them and their Christian people unless the British Government effectually interposes its just influence (sic). In 1847, thirteen Missionaries presented a Memorial on the subject of slavery, the same word "amelioration" was promised in reply, but that eight years more elapsed before anything was done and then only through the influence exerted from England. Petitioners therfore trust that they will not be judged unreasonable if they allow their former experience so to modify their expectations at present - especially when the extreme vagueness of the expressions is noted, - as to plead that from the most favourable portion of the reply their petition to His Highness they have only additional cause to solicit the interference of the British Government.

20. That petitioners solicit the attention of the Madras Government to the great injustice which has been committed in the investigations which have arisen out of the outbreaks in January last. Shanars, accused by Soodras of comparatively trivial offence, have been not only imprisoned, but put in fetters and manacles before trial, and kept so for months. In one instance, some women were charged with carrying pots of water on the hip instead of on the head, and they not being taken, their male relatives were imprisoned and kept in irons for two or three months without trial for the above reason; and in these cases, bail, though offered, was refused. On the other hand, Soodras, accused of arson and such serious crimes, have been allowed to be free either with or without bail, - have been treated with great indulgence when called up for inquiry, and have been able with impunity to abuse and intimidate the vakeels and witnesses in the cases against them. The mode of taking the depositions and conducting the investigations has been such as to pervert justice in fovour of the Soodras and against the

Shanars. When at last some hope of obtaining justice arose by the appointment of a Judicial Commission by the recommendation, it is believed, of the Madras Government, special orders from the Palace were inserted in their instructions that they were, not to investigate the cases *de novo*, but pass sentence according to the depositions already recorded in the ordinary Courts. Thus the influence of the Soodras, which began by falsifying the cases in the depostions, triumphed by employing the highest authority to confirm their intrigues. And thus a plain proof is afforded of the present state of the Travancore Government under the influence exercised on the Rajah.

21. Petitioners hope they may be allowed to make reference to the treaty of 1805 between the Honorable English East India Company and the Rajah of Travancore, in the nineth Article of which the Rajah thus engages himself;

"His Highness hereby promises to pay at all times the utmost attention to such advice as the English Government shall occasionally judge it necessary to offer to him with a view to the economy of his finances, the better collection of his revenues, the administration of justice, the extension of commerce, the encouragement of trade, agriculture and industry, or any other objects connected with the advancement of His Highness's interests, the happiness of his people, or the mutual welfare of both states".

22. That petitioners, in accordance with the above facts, earnestly appeal to the Honorable the Governor in Council to call upon His Highness the Rajah to fulfil his engagements by treaty by removing those grievances which now exist contrary to the upright "administration of justice" and "to the happiness of the People". Petitioners' sole object is to procure equal and impartial justice for all persons alike and they submit that to this end the following measures are necessary;

The exemption of all Europeans from liability to native law, and the rendering them subject, to autorities appointed by the British Government.

Similar regulations concerning their residence in the Country and erection of places of worship.

Redress for the insults already experienced and for the conduct of native officials towards whom the Rajah has not yet evinced even displeasure in accordance with the circumstances.

Some arrangements to prevent Soodras from perverting justice, and monopolizing influence in their own favor.

Equitable regulations for the status of Christian converts, - for their not being disinherited, but allowed to inherit as in British territory where none suffer loss of property on account of change of religion, - and for the exercise of parents' rights over their own children.

The entire removal of slavery, all kinds of forced labour, and all barbarisms in the laws and rules affecting dress and other things.

A correction of the abuses which exist in the present mode of conducting business in the Courts and police, - the reform of the offices by the removal of those who are known to be incompetent, or guilty of injustice and cruelty, and such a constitution of judicial and other authorities by which Christians may be able to obtain justice equally with those of any other class.

23. Petitioners feel that they can make this appeal with more confidence because they are but seeking that which is in accordance with the increasing enlightenment and civilization of the age, and with the constantly extending exertion of British influence, so often put forth for the improvement

of all classes of men. Even the once impenetrable barriers of China and Japan are now thrown down, but Travancore, while open to intercourse still maintains an inner wall of ancient and barbarous customs and caste prejudices, not merely prevailing as such among the people, but entering into the whole constitution of Government, and enforced by authority which has the effect of perverting justice, excluding the people from improvement and the Country from prosperity. These customs and prejudices are not an essential part of the Travancore religion or polity, - some parts having been removed without impairing the entirety of those systems showing that further reform can be effected.

24. In conclusion, petitioners fully persuaded by experience that the British Government alone can effect the improvements so much needed in Travancore, and believing that they, by their position, connection, treaty, and even by self interest, are bound to do so, pray the Honorable the Governor in Council to take the affairs of Travancore into serious consideration, and in order to carry out the needful reforms, to institute a strict inquiry or adopt such measures as may be deemed most suitable.

(Signed) James Russel, Nagercoil
,, John Cox, Trivandrum
,, Ebenezer Lewis
,, Frederick Baylis, Neyoor

John Joll Dennis, Nagercoil, has read and approved this petition, but is absent on a journey to the Neilgherries.

(Signed) John Cox, Secretary, T.D.C., L.M.S
,, Samuel Mateer, Pareychaley
,, George Harvey Ashton, Auttoor

Pol. Proc., 1859, vol. III, pp. 126-32

Government's reply to the petition of the Missionaries dated 7th February 1859

Resident's Office, Cochin,
14th April, 1859.

To

The Rev. Messrs J. Russel
J. Cox
J. Abbs
E. Lewis
F. Baylis, and
J. J. Dennis

Gentlemen,

I have been requested by His Highness the Rajah to acknowledge the receipt of your petition of the 7th February.

His Highness observes that it will not be necessary to notice, in detail, the statements and arguments in your petition.

It was a source of great regret to His Highness to see parties of his subjects in that part of the country manifesting a want of respect for the laws.

His Highness learns however from the Dewan that tranquillity has been re-established, and that measures have been taken for the punishment of guilty parties.

His Highness requests me to assure you that conduct, on the part of any class of His Highness's subjects, adverse to the cause of order, will ever meet with his highest displeasure.

Anxious for the improvement of his subjects and the preservation of peace, His Highness has under consideration

measures of amelioration to be adopted as early as possible in consultation with the British Resident.

(Signed) W. Cullen,
Resident.

Pol. Proc., 1859, vol. III, p. 135

APPENDIX VIII

PROCLAMATION OF THE RAJA OF TRAVANCORE, 26 JULY 1859

In as much as we have been informed of the grievance occasioned by the Proclamation of the 23rd of Makaram, 1004, on the subject of the upper-cloth of Shanar women, and it is our will and pleasure to treat all people, as far as we can, in such a manner as none shall feel aggrieved; we hereby proclaim that there is no objection to Shanar women either putting on a jacket, like the Christian women, or to Shanar women of all creeds dressing in coarse cloth, or to their covering their bosems in any manner whatever; but not like women of high caste.

Proclamations from 1858-1874 A. D.,
Show Case Records, No. 252, p. 27

APPENDIX IX

CIRCULAR OF RAMIENGAR, DEWAN OF TRAVANCORE, 21 JULY 1884

There being reason to believe that Pooliars and other humbler classes of the population still found difficulty in getting free access to the public courts and cutcherries and are not unfrequently obstructed in the use of the public high ways and markets, His Highness' government deem it necessary to call the attention of all public officers to an order issued from the Huzur on this subject on the 26th Panguni 1045, and to impress upon all concerned that the courts and cutcherries of the state and all public roads and market places are open alike to all classes of His Highness' subjects without distinction of creed or caste, and that no man shall be allowed to hinder another from the free use of them on any ground whatsoever, such hindrance being an unjustifiable interference with the liberty of the subject and calculated to defeat the impartial administration of justice.

Any public officer who may be found to deny 'free access to himself, on business, to any section of the population and who may not personally receive or hear petitions from any person or conduct investigations into cases in the presence and within the hearing of the parties concerned, on the ground

that such persons are of low caste, will be visited with the severest displeasure of government.

Trivandrum, V. Ramiengar,
21st July 1884. Dewan.

Official Papers, pp. 45-46

APPENDIX X

MEMORIAL OF THE SOUTH INDIAN MISSIONARY CONFERENCE TO THE VICEROY AND GOVERNOR GENERAL -IN-COUNCIL, 22 MAY 1980

Humbly Sheweth, - that this Conference, consisting of Protestant Missionaries representing almost all the missionary societies at work in South India, desires to express its deep sense of the injustice done to converts to Christianity in the Native States of Travancore, Cochin, and Mysore, in depriving them of civil rights, solely on the ground of their change in religious convictions.

2. It further desires to express its deep regret that the Government of India, in its letter No. 3021 I. A., dated Simla, November 7th, 1898, refuses to advise the Governments of these Native States to remove this injustice on the following grounds:-

(a) That the societies in question are opposed to such a measure; (b) the Roman Catholics did not join in the memorial presented to the Government of India on the subject; (c) that the converts already gained by Christianity are from classes destitute of property, and that legislation is therefore uncalled for.

3. Your memorialists would respectfully urge – (a) that while Act XXI of 1850 has for the last 50 years, been in operation in British India, where the same classes of people as exist in these Native States are found in large numbers - and the same joint family system prevails to a large extent, it has produced no evil result to the social fabric of the country; (b) that the silence of the Roman Catholic Church upto the present does not affect the real merits of the case, and (c) that the statement that converts are from classes destitute of property is disproved by the fact that on several occasions cases involving property have been brought before the Courts of Travancore, and but for the adverse decision of the Courts which have ruled that "a convert to Christianity loses *ipso facto* all rights to the property of the family to which he was entitled before his conversion" many more cases would have been brought to notice.

4. The regret of your memorialists at the decision of the Government of India is intensified by the fact that when this order was issued the Mysore Government was engaged in drafting a regulation which would have secured to Native Christian converts in the State rights of property of whatever kind, but on receipt of that order, the Mysore Gevernment felt compelled to abandon its proposed legislation.

5. Your memorialists therefore pray that the Government of india will reconsider its decision, and by encouraging Mysore Government in its spontaneous efforts, to remove

some of the disabilities complained of and by advising the Government of Travancore and Cochin to proceed on the same lines, or to adopt Act XXI of 1850, assist in obtaining for Native Christian converts in Native States the religious liberty and civil rights which the same class enjoy in British India.

And your memorialists will ever pray.

G. O. Nos. 599, 600, 9 October 1901,
Government of Madras, pp. 139-40

APPENDIX XI

CONFESSION OF FAITH, S.I.U.C

Note:- As the Confession is a human instrument, it is understood that persons assenting to it do not commit themselves to every word or phrase, but accept it as a basis of union, and as embodying substantially the vital truths held in common by the uniting Churches.

1. We believe in one God, who is a personal spirit, the Creator, Sustainer, and Governor of all things, infinite in love, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth,

We acknowledge the mystery of Holy Trinity - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Sprit.

2. We believe that God, who manifests Himself in Creation and Providence, and especially in the spirit of man, has been pleased to reveal His Mind and Will for our salvation in various ways with ever-growing fulness and that the record of this revelation, so far as needful for our salvation, is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which are therefore to be devoutly studies by all; and we reverently acknowledge the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures to be the Supreme Authority in matters of faith and duty.

3. We believe that all men are made in the image of God, and are brethren. We acknowledge that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, having in manifold ways offended against God's good and holy law; and that out of this condition no man is able to deliver himself.

4. We believe that, to save man from the guilt and power of sin. God the Father in His infinite love sent in to the world His only begotten Son, who alone is the perfect incarnation of God, and through whom alone men can be saved; that the Lord Jesus Christ, through words of grace, and through His perfect obedience, even unto the death in the cross, did reveal the Father; and by His life, death, and resurrection, did establish away by which men may obtain forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life; that the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, maketh us partakers of salvation, enlightening our minds, convincing us of our sins, persuading us to accept Jesus Christ and working in us the fruits of righteousness.

5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has established a Church for the realization of the Kingdom of God, in which Church all who follow Him in sincerity are members and that He entrusted to the Church the duty of making known to all men the Gospel of Salvation through His Name. We also believe that He instituted the ministry of the word, and the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in a judgement through Christ thereby all shall receive according to the deeds done in the present life, whether good or bad.

General Assembly, 1908, pp. 4-5

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GLOSSARY

Adhikari	—	Village Revenue Officer
Bankshall	—	Warehouse
Batta		An extra allowance made to officers, soldiers or other public servants, when in the field or on other special grounds; also subsistence money given to witnesses, prisoners and the like
Cadjan	—	The dried leaf of the palmyra
Chuckram or Cakram	—	A Travancore copper coin
Cutcherry or Kacceri	—	An office of administration; a court-house
Dewan or Dalava	—	Official designation of the head of the administration in Travancore
Dewan Peishkar	—	District Collector
Gumasta or Goomastah	—	Clerk
Huzoor Cutcherry	—	Dewan's office
Janmam	—	The right of proprietorship which the owner has over his property. It literally means 'birth right'.
Jenmi	—	Landlord
Kaliyuga	—	The cycle of time represented by Kali

Kar	The crop gathered in the month of Kanni (September - October)
Karanavan	The eldest male member or head of matriarchal family
Karyakkar	The administrative heads of taluks in former days
Kotta	A measure of land as well as grain; also a fort
Kovil	Temple
Kudiyan	Tenant
Kuppayam	A jacket
Madampimar, Prabhukkanmar	Wealthy Nair landlords
Malayar	Hill tribes
Marumakkattayam	A system of inheritance in which devolution of property is through the female line
Murajapam	A sexennial ceremony conducted in Trivandrum on a grand scale
Nadu	A territorial unit
Neettu or Neet	Writ or Commission
Panam or Fanam	A silver coin equivalent to four chuckrams
Para	A grain measure holding ten Edangazhis
Pidakai	An administrative sub-division of a taluk; village
Pidakaikkar	The people of a pidakai or village
Potti	A temple priest

Proverthy	Village
Pulappedi	Fear of Pulayas
Sarvadhikaryakkar	A district officer under the Dewan
Satyagraha	Passive resistance; a fight for some cause by non - violent methods
Sirkar, Sircar	Government
Star Pagoda	A gold coin. According to the old Madras monetary system, prevailing till 1818, 42 panams went to make up one star pagoda and a Madras panam was therefore worth 2 d.
Taluk or Taluq	A division of a district, presided over as regards revenue matters by a Tahsildar
Tana or Thannah	Lock-up
Taravad or Tarwad	A joint family
Viruthi	Land assigned for performing certain services
Zillah Court	Old name for District and Sessions Court

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